

# REPLY

XI.

TO THE

AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS OF THE REV.  
RICHARD WATSON,

TO THOSE

TRUSTEES, STEWARDS, LOCAL PREACHERS, AND LEADERS,  
OF THE LONDON SOUTH CIRCUIT,

*Whose names are affixed to certain Resolutions, bearing date Sept. 23, 1828 :*

BEING A DEFENCE OF THE

CONCESSIONS AND CODE OF LAWS OF 1797,

AND

Of the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism,

AGAINST THE

MODERN ASSUMPTIONS OF MINISTERIAL POWER.

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*Second Edition.*

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ERRATA.

Page 16, line 27, read—the whole of them, *relating to the people.*

96, lines 21 and 36, for *third*, read *second*.

## REPLY, &c.

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REV. SIR,

Your Address was announced at our Quarterly Meeting, prior to its publication, by one of your brethren in the ministry, evidently much interested in its success. We were happy to hear that the party, whose champion you have consented to become, intended, at last, to say something; something, we did indeed hope, which might operate, if not as a justification, at least as a palliation of those extraordinary proceedings, which had shocked and grieved the whole Connexion.

This anticipated satisfaction, however, was very considerably abated on hearing it asserted, that Mr. Watson had conceded nothing;—that he had acknowledged nothing to be wrong;—that he had not disapproved a single step taken by the Leeds Special District Meeting;—nor sought to palliate or excuse any thing on the part of the superintendant or the Conference! “What!” we exclaimed with surprise, “does Mr. Watson justify the imposition of an organ on the Leeds people, after so strenuous an opposition by the local authorities?—Does he justify the violation by the Conference of their own law of 1820, relative to organs?—Does he justify the suspension of Mr. M. Johnson, contrary to the judgment of his brethren, and in a case in which neither doctrine nor morals were concerned?—Does Mr. Watson approve of the pouring in of the members of a special district meeting, to influence the deliberations, and controul the decisions of a leaders’ meeting?—Is he become the advocate of the new tests of moral and Methodistical qualification; and of the outrageous enactment of the Leeds Special District Meeting, ‘that no leader shall be allowed to vote in any trials, or to take part as a leader in the administration of our church government, so long as he refuses’ to swallow these odious tests?—Above all, does Mr. Watson defend the cutting off from the church of God of upwards of 1000 souls, for their conscientious objection to depart from the simplicity of that worship, to which they had been ever accustomed; and when no offence, moral or Methodistical, could be alleged against them, save the proceedings by

which they sought to avoid an imposition, as unrighteous in itself, as it was unsupported by the laws and usages of the Connexion?"

We are frank to confess our astonishment at the reply, that Mr. Watson had not touched any of these points; and could, with difficulty, suppress a feeling of indignation, on hearing a book cried up as an answer to the Address of this Circuit, in which the acknowledged facts of the Leeds case, (on which facts, as admitted in the accredited documents, that Address was founded,) were studiously kept out of view! Thus, Sir, after a very protracted silence, during which every ungenerous effort has been made to suppress the voice of truth, by representing those from whom it proceeded as turbulent, factious, disreputable, and disaffected people; and after compelling us to disabuse ourselves and the Connexion of these foul slanders by the publication of our names; on being constrained at last to speak out, you find it necessary wholly to abandon the case which had excited all our complaints; and to amuse us with fanciful speculations, and theoretical reasonings, on matters which have little or no connexion with the question discussed in the Address of the London South Circuit!

On turning to your pamphlet, we find that we owe you some acknowledgment, which, being small, we are anxious to make at the outset. You "cannot perceive that we have any grievance to urge, springing from the government of our successive superintendants in our own circuit; none drawn from the other metropolitan circuits." It would hence appear, that we do not complain where we have no real grievance. For this admission, of course, we thank you. The case of which we did complain is set forth in our Address to the Conference; and is precisely the one which you have so carefully abstained from noticing in your Address to us! If, however, it should turn out that there have been real causes of grievance, even in the metropolitan circuits, (and which cannot be denied,) then we gain the more by this admission; viz., that we not only do not complain without a cause, but that we can really bear some things with meekness and patience; and that our complaints are only to be extorted by what really cannot be endured. We accept this acknowledgment the more readily, because we are conscious that it is due to us; and the conviction that you were addressing men of this temper and character, ought to have qualified many things which your pamphlet contains.

If in a solitary instance, however, we can trace a principle of equity and justice, this is far from being the tone and character of your Address. You have entitled it, "*An Affectionate Address!*" Some men have singular notions of affection; and methods equally singular of displaying it. In strict conformity, doubtless, with your notions on the subject, you



have proceeded to set down some of us as "designing and artful men," who, you fear, "care nothing for Methodism, and for the constitution of 1797." And the rest of us as a set of "simple and ignorant" men, incapable of forming a judgment of our own, and, therefore, readily "taken by guile," and "played upon by the artifice of others." This is abuse, Sir, if you please, but it is neither affection nor argument. It would have been more honourable to have laid aside this mask, inasmuch as an open foe is more honourable than one who conceals his weapons under the garb of friendship. We have no apology to make for the defects of our understandings; but they must be defective indeed, not to point out to us, that your Address, instead of being luminous, healing, and conciliatory, is fraught with the highest spirit of priestly domination; and that it is designed, under pleas the most ingeniously disguised, to strip the leaders' meeting of every vestige of vote, leaving them but the title of a mock consultation. We beg leave also to assure you, that, being now warned of the "artifice of others," we have sense enough to perceive, that you, as the advocate of a party, anxious to get rid of the concessions of 1797, and to secure to yourselves absolute dominion in the church, have, on this subject, a very strong and direct interest in seeking to beguile and mislead us; whilst, on the other hand, no such motive can possibly exist on the part of any members of the Quarterly Meeting. They have all one common interest in maintaining those concessions, and in protecting this circuit from the ravages which have been committed at Leeds.

The above "artifice" is intimately connected with another most "disingenuous" attempt, to single out one or more individuals, whom you are pleased to term the writer and the framers of our Address and Resolutions. The Address, Sir, was originally the result of the reflections of some of our "more intelligent and influential friends," on the publications which your late President directed to be circulated in this circuit. It was first read in the Quarterly Meeting, and thence referred to a very competent and highly respectable Committee. This Committee canvassed every paragraph, weighed every argument, examined and compared every thing with the rules and concessions of 1797; and having spent a fortnight in diligently and carefully revising, altering, and correcting the Address, they finally presented the result of their labours to an adjourned Quarterly Meeting, who adopted it in its present form, and ordered it to be signed on their behalf by the circuit stewards. Never was a public document prepared with greater care and deliberation;—never did there appear, on any branch of Methodist discipline and government, an argument which claimed and merited more serious attention from the Methodist public. You have wisely confined your attack to about eight

pages only of this Address. You have, indeed, laboured hard and warily, and have done what you could! You have exhausted all your resources of art, stratagem, and strength. But it was a fruitless attempt; and the failure only serves to prove, beyond all argument, the intrinsic merit and solid character of this highly constitutional and unanswerable work. After all your laboured efforts, it stands a monument, not of Independency, as you would falsely represent, but of the sound Methodistical principles, and truly Christian views and sentiments, of a circuit, inferior to none in the Methodist Connexion. An angry and disappointed tyranny, indeed, dashes its foaming rage against its base; but it stands, a rock that cannot be moved; and, frowning on your folly, it bids you retire and be calm. To attribute such a work to individual merit, is to award a palm which no individual amongst us would have the temerity to claim. As the assignment, however, is made by you, evidently to gratify a spirit of deep malevolence against some individual—and, in all probability, to pay off an old grudge, we deem it proper to remark, that if other motive had been wanting, gratitude, and the indulgence you have already received at our hands, ought to have deterred you from such an effort. Could we have descended so low, we might easily have found an author of the petulant, unfounded, and very discreditable Resolutions of the last Conference, relative to this same Address. These Resolutions, however, having passed the Conference, we treated them as a public act, for which no individual could be held responsible. We are far, indeed, from thinking, (and we make the acknowledgment with pleasure,) that the great body of preachers, piously labouring in the circuits, ever wished for the extravagant power, which you, and the party you advocate, have claimed; but they are misled and abused by a factious band of ambitious men; and are taught to believe, that these powers are necessary to the existence and prosperity of their work. Be this as it may, we might, perhaps, fairly have taken that occasion of warning the Conference, against entrusting a man of deeply wounded feelings, and bitter personal animosities, with the drawing up of public documents, for which they, as a body, must be deemed responsible.

II. Previously to entering on a more direct notice of your Pamphlet, we must beg leave to recal attention to the real question discussed in Part I. of the London South Address. This is the more necessary, *first*, because you have endeavoured to mix up that simple question with a multitude of other questions, which have no necessary connexion with it; and, *secondly*, because, throughout your pamphlet, you are exceedingly shy of letting us speak for ourselves. You not only seem afraid to quote our language, in stating the question



generally, but, even when professing to reply to some particular argument, you are very careful to give the reader a version of your own; and which, (as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter,) generally turns out to be something very different from what is to be found in the London South Address.

1. Let it be observed, then, in the first place, that, in the introductory part of our Address to the Conference, we have solemnly and repeatedly avowed our sincere attachment to the general institutions and economy of Wesleyan Methodism; and have declared, "that we do not yield, even to the Conference itself, in ardent attachment to the constitution and discipline of the Connexion, as laid down by Mr. Wesley."

2. That in no part of our Address and Resolutions is any change proposed; or even a wish intimated for any improvement in the general system and discipline of the Connexion. On the contrary, we declare, "that we wish for no changes in the system of Methodism;" that "we are content and satisfied with that system, as it has long been established in this circuit." Is this Independency? Is it faction? Is it reform?

These solemn declarations of a whole circuit, attested by the signatures of the circuit stewards, in the first instance, and subsequently by those of 104 officers of the church, many of them of the highest character for respectability, piety, and long standing in the Societies, will, we think, have weight with the Connexion. You, indeed, Sir, with admirable modesty, have chosen, in twenty places of your pamphlet, and without a shadow of proof, to call in question these solemn and repeated declarations. You have told us, you fear that some of us "care nothing for Methodism," and talked to us about every man we meet having "his project for mending matters of government, as every man can tell us of an infallible remedy for the tooth-ache;" although you well knew that our Address contained no project for "mending Methodism," nor any proposition for altering any thing relating to it. In all this, therefore, you have only illustrated your own character, without affecting that of this circuit. Some men, it would appear, have constitutional failings, which seem to bid equal defiance to truth and good manners.\*

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\* It were beneath us to enter on personal recrimination, and yet we cannot but express our astonishment, that, whilst dealing out your unfounded insinuations against the men who are the lights of our Israel, and the best friends of Methodism in this circuit; men who have built our chapels, maintained our ministers, founded and supported our charities; who, by the most devoted sacrifices of time, of talent, of influence, and of property, have upheld our general system, as a pure revival of primitive Christianity; and by their lives, their conduct, and conversation, have adorned and commended that system to the world, as all that was "lovely and of good report amongst men!"—we cannot but wonder, Sir, that, whilst reviling these

3. It is no speculative question then, no new theory or plan of improvement or reform, which is discussed in the South London Address. From beginning to end, no such question is introduced; we admit, that whatever may be the opinions of individuals, as to the theory of our constitution, we have enjoyed peace and prosperity under it; where that is the case, we should hold it unlawful to disturb any church with speculative questions, the discussion of which might distract the attention of its members and disturb its peace. But it was for this very reason, that we were not willing to allow others to speculate with the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism, and to sport with its laws, for the purpose of establishing in the ministry a power which the Connexion has never yet acknowledged, and which it never can admit, without first surrendering its fundamental principles of church government. In the printed Resolutions of the Leeds Special District Meeting, we found, that an attempt of this kind had not only been made, but that it had actually been carried through, with a reckless disregard of character and consequence, and at a sacrifice to the societies of upwards of 1000 souls. How terrible are the sacrifices, which daring men will make at the shrine of ambition! In order to place this attempt in its true light, it will be necessary to contrast the principle of Methodistical law, as laid down in the Plan of Pacification, and other documents, with the leading and acknowledged facts of the Leeds case. This we shall attempt here, even at the risk of extending our introductory matter to an inconvenient length; no matter can be of more vital importance to the Connexion, for our spiritual prosperity itself depends on our maintaining unimpaired our existing institutions. No apology, therefore, will be needful to the general reader for adverting here to the

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men, you should forget the Methodistical delinquencies of your past life, and your published and recorded opinions on that system which, you now tell us, some of us "care nothing about." You, indeed, are in the condition of Job; "If you should justify yourself, your own mouth shall condemn you; if you say, I am perfect, it shall also prove you perverse." Job ix. 20. Many, who have read the life of John Cash, in the Magazine of the New Connexion,—the Book of Kane,—and, what some friend of the New Connexion has superadded to the last mentioned work,—the Book of Richard, in three parts, may, probably, think there is much more reason to question the purity and disinterestedness which led you again to attach yourself to the system you *now* abet! God forbid that we should judge you! But we appeal to all the world, whether Richard Watson can have any right to expound to us the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism! and to accuse us of disaffection to that system, which we have uniformly and strenuously supported, but which he has reviled and lamentably traduced! *Fiat justitia ruat cælum!*

### III. PRINCIPLES *and* FACTS of the recent Controversy at Leeds.

The PLAN of PACIFICATION is a solemn treaty between the Conference and several hundred trustees, and other principal friends, who assembled at Manchester, on behalf of the people, in the year 1795. It is entitled, "*Articles of Agreement for general pacification.*" These Articles are arranged under two distinct heads: I. *Concerning the LORD'S SUPPER, BAPTISM, &c.* II. *Concerning DISCIPLINE.* Under both these heads the Plan of Pacification contains highly important and useful regulations, the value of which is enhanced by the still more important principles, which are necessarily implied, and conceded by the Conference, in these regulations. This plan, however, was very defective under the second head, relating to matters of discipline. It provided chiefly for the trial of preachers, and left many rights, which the people justly and scripturally claimed, wholly undefined. As a plan of "*general pacification,*" therefore, it failed; for some of the preachers in that day, as in the present, had high notions of their own powers. In what church, and in what age, were the clergy destitute of such notions? The commotions and agitations which disturbed the Connexion therefore continued, and it was presently found impossible for the system to go on without a further settlement.

Accordingly, about two hundred trustees, delegates from all parts of the kingdom, assembled at Leeds during the sittings of Conference, in the year 1797. The Conference, of course, did not much relish these sturdy assemblies, who came fully prepared to discuss and maintain their Christian liberties. They numbered amongst them the authors of many able pamphlets and resolutions, on the subject of Methodistical government, and were masters of their subject. It is amusing to see this Conference, in their Address to the American Methodists, complaining of "*violent convulsions;*" of "*liberty being made a cloak for licentiousness;*" and invoking the sympathies of our dear brother Jonathan, as though those "*lads of liberty,*" across the Atlantic, could weep with the discomfited champions of an arbitrary system of government! Upon the whole, however, the Conference of 1797 put a tolerable face upon the matter. They entered into a further treaty with the delegates, containing, under distinct heads, many stipulations of vital importance, touching financial and all other temporal matters, the admission and expulsion of members, the appointment and removal of leaders, stewards, and local preachers, &c. &c. These stipulations were published in a printed Circular, and were forwarded to the circuits before the Conference broke up. The same Conference determined, that all the rules which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings, should be published with

the Rules of the Society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members. The stipulations contained in the printed circular, with the Rules so collected and published at the same period, constitute what are denominated "*The CONCESSIONS, of 1797.*" The *Plan of Pacification*, and these *Concessions*, have been not inaptly termed, the *Magna Charta*, and the *Bill of Rights*, of the Methodist Connexion. To give the greater solemnity to these solemn engagements, the following Declaration, subscribed by one hundred and forty-five preachers, including the president and secretary of the Conference, appeared in the printed Minutes for that year, dated August 1st, 1797.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, have, on this and the preceding day, carefully revised the rules drawn up and left us by our late venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which were published by him in our large Minutes, to which we consented when we were admitted, and by which we were regulated during his life: and whereas we have collected together those rules which we believe to be essential to the existence of Methodism, as well as others to which we have no objection; we do now VOLUNTARILY and in GOOD FAITH sign our names, as approving of and engaging to comply with the aforesaid collection of rules, or code of laws, God being our helper!"

With a view to extend the knowledge of these standard regulations, as well as to shut out all complaint of quotations, we have printed the whole of them in an Appendix. In some respects they present but a poor specimen of Methodistical legislation, but they are sufficient for practical purposes; and so long as we maintain them in their true spirit and common-sense acceptation, neither Conference, nor District Meeting, nor Superintendant, can trample on our liberties. As matters of solemn treaty and compact between the Conference and the Connexion, we ought carefully to distinguish them from all other Conference laws and regulations; and must not omit to remark; that the Conference itself has no power whatever to make a law, or to enjoin or sanction any act, which shall have the effect of altering, revoking, or weakening, these fundamental articles, for that would imply a gross breach of faith with the people. This principle is not only admitted, but insisted upon, by Mr. Vevers, in his amusing pamphlet; which, having been published at the Book Room, and applauded in the Magazine, we presume we may quote as an authority.—"The Conference itself," he remarks, "has not the power to make or to promulgate any new law, which changes or affects the Constitution of Methodism. By so doing, it would commit an act of suicide. I maintain that the Conference has not that power, unless it destroy itself." p. 11. You have also, Sir, faintly told us in your Address, p. 14, that "the rules of 1795 and

1797, in their fair and consuetudinary interpretation, are always considered by the Conference, as the final rule of decision." The admission, thus extorted, is of some value in a book written expressly to undermine those rules, by forcing on them, as consuetudinary, an interpretation, (or rather, by grafting on them an exceptional power and right of interference in extraordinary cases,) which they not only do not sanction, but which, as we shall show, is calculated wholly to destroy their effect. The men of 1797, who thus stipulated with the Conference, whom Mr. VEVERS calls the "friends of religious liberty and of primitive and genuine Methodism," and of whom he remarks, "there were giants in the earth in those days!" (p. 6,) knew too well what they were about, to admit of any such exceptional power or right of interference, as you contend for. Even your pleas of necessity and the public good, which form the pith and substance of your Address to us, would not have been listened to for a moment by those "*giants*." They were too well aware of the truth which a nervous pen has lately enforced upon the nation, that "all free institutions have perished by the introduction of an exceptional power, to which the authority of superseding the laws has been unwarily or craftily entrusted;" and that "all pernicious laws and precedents have been ushered into free governments upon the plea of some public good to be attained. It would be too barefaced and useless an attempt to enslave a whole people, by telling them that their slavery was the object intended."

Recurring, then, to the principle laid down in the Plan of Pacification, the following are literal copies of the first and fourth Articles, under the first head of that Plan.

ARTICLE 1. "The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel, on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel, (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people,) on the other hand, *allow of it*. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be obtained before the Lord's Supper be administered.

ARTICLE 4. "The administration of baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in church hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned."

The above articles furnish a clear principle, on matters highly important and necessary to a Christian church, but which had not theretofore been deemed essential to Methodism—matters then newly introduced, and with which Mr. Wesley would not allow his lay preachers to meddle during his life. They are *positive* and *absolute*. The Plan of Pacification contains no reservation of an exceptional power, or appellat jurisdiction, in favour of the Conference; no pro-



vision for the interference of a special district meeting ; no exception in favour of the inherent rights of ministers and pastors. The *consent* of the people, as represented by the stewards and leaders, is indispensable,—*consent* is all that is reserved to the Conference. In these respects, then, (we tremble, Sir, for your nerves,) the Conference have actually “introduced a power, in the strict sense, co-ordinate with the ministry!” and “if it is a co-ordinate power, in no case can you act without its authority!” Watson’s Address, p. 10.

Now, Sir, notwithstanding all the smoke and clamour which you have raised about “bold assertions,” “dishonest attempts,” and “the artful leadings of designing men,” we must still beg leave to put it to the Connexion at large, whether the plain, pacific, and truly primitive principle thus laid down, of giving to the trustees, leaders, and stewards a voice, (that is, the effective vote of a majority, and not the mockery of a consultation, by which the superintendant shall not be bound,) in the administration of the Lord’s Supper, baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in church hours,—whether, we say, this principle be not the true Methodistical principle, applicable to all matters which some may deem of importance, but which are not essential in the economy of Methodism ; and whether, therefore, this principle do not equally apply to organs, liturgies, surplices, and every other appendage of public worship ; we insist, that this just and equitable principle applies equally to all such matters, and that for the following reasons.

1. Because all the more eminent and standard writers on the discipline and practice of the primitive churches, have admitted and proved, that the members of those churches, as well as their ministers, had an effective voice in whatever concerned the discipline and ordinances of the church.\* This principle constituted one of those powerful arguments employed in the controversy of 1795 and 1797, and on which the Plan of Pacification and Concessions were founded, as appears by a multitude of pamphlets in our possession. It is therefore a *fundamental* principle of Wesleyan Methodism. The object of your Address, indeed, is to overthrow this principle ; and yet, with strange inconsistency, you tell us, p. 15, “The more clearly we perceive our system to rest on Holy Scripture, and the reason of things, the more firmly shall we be united to maintain and cherish it.”

2. Because the counter-principle, laid down in the Minutes of the Leeds Special District Meeting, on the right of a lea-

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\* The writer of the Review of Mr. Leach’s Pamphlet, in the Methodist Magazine, for May last, has borrowed and misapplied the substance of a note by the translator of Mosheim ; but has forgotten to tell his readers, that both Mosheim and his translator are decided in support of this right and practice of the primitive church. See his Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I. Cap. II. Sec. vi. p. 99. See also Milner’s Church History, Vol. I. p. 514.

ders' meeting to express its *opinion*, when it is proposed to introduce an organ into any chapel with which such meeting may be connected, viz. that such opinions "are not, on any just principle, or by any law or usage of Methodism, to be admitted as binding,"—and which principle it is the object of your book to maintain,—is altogether contrary to Holy Scripture and the reason of things. It is also, as you very well know, as contrary to the hitherto acknowledged practice of Methodism, as it is to justice, equity, and good faith; and, like the mock consultation, which you recommend as between the superintendant and the leaders' meeting, but in which, as you tell us, p. 8, "the ultimate decision must rest with the minister himself," it is an insult on the good sense and intelligence of the local meetings, and a most unwarrantable encroachment of the ministerial power on the liberties of the church.

3. But the universal application of this truly Methodistical and pacific principle, that the local authorities have an *effective vote*, in whatever concerns the administration of the church, does not rest solely or chiefly on general arguments. By the same Plan of Pacification, it is extended to the trial of preachers in relation to, 1. DOCTRINE, 2. MORALS, 3. ABILITIES, and 4. OBEDIENCE to Methodistical Rules. Is this evidence, Sir?—or are we to be told, that the votes of the trustees, leaders, and stewards, *on these matters*, "are not on any just principle, or by any law or usage of Methodism, to be admitted as binding"?

4. Again: By the articles under the *first* head of the Concessions of 1797, no *financial* matter, and by the articles under the *second* head of the same Concessions, *no other temporal matter*, (evidently in contradistinction to *finance*,) can be taken up or transacted by the District Meeting, "till the approbation of the respective Quarterly Meetings be first given, *signed by the circuit stewards*." This fundamental article of our Constitution, appears not to have been sufficiently insisted on, in the present controversy. Unless an organ be decreed to be a purely *spiritual* matter; if it have any form and substance which give it affinity to "*things temporal*," then, by this rule, the application of the Brunswick Chapel Trustees to the District Meeting, in the first instance, was a violation of the Constitution of Methodism. It is not pretended, that these trustees had the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting, signed by the circuit stewards; but without such approbation, and so signed, the District Meeting had no right whatever to entertain the question; and this, be it remembered, is one of the *fundamental* laws which the Conference has no right whatever to alter, revoke, or infringe.

5. The Conference long ago approved and printed in their

Minutes, a form of Trust Deed, for the settlement of our chapels. They have repeatedly and strenuously enjoined all the chapels to be settled according to this form. They have enjoined the superintendants not to allow any chapel to be occupied for public worship until so settled; and it is a standing regulation of the Chapel Fund, that no assistance from that fund shall be granted in aid of any chapel, which has not been previously settled on the Conference plan. This Conference form of trust, as we have shown in the Address of this circuit to the Conference, p. 34, places all *alterations* as to the times, or *additions* to public worship, on the same footing, and to be regulated by the same principle as is laid down in the Plan of Pacification. This argument, which is more fully stated in our Address to the Conference, is doubtless one of those which you are pleased to term, "bold assertions," "artful leadings," &c. Our arguments, however, are now before the public; and, such is our opinion of them, that we think the man, who will assert, after weighing them, that the pacific principle laid down in 1795, (and then conceded *absolutely*, in regard to the doctrine, conduct, morals, and abilities of preachers,—to the Lord's Supper, baptism, burial, and service in church hours, and generally to all *temporal* matters,) is not applicable to organs, liturgies, &c. and indeed to every change in, or addition to, public worship in a Methodist chapel, either wants common sense, or he is destitute of a quality still more estimable.

Lastly, This principle was evidently acted upon by the Conference, in their law of 1820, relative to organs. By that law, no new or different principle is laid down; but, as by the Plan of Pacification the sacrament could not be administered, until the *consent* of the Conference had been first obtained; so, by the law of 1820 it is assumed, that the special *consent* of the Conference is necessary to the erection of an organ, in a Methodist chapel. The law of 1820 proceeds, then, not by any means to infringe on the Plan of Pacification, by laying down a new principle, but to regulate what it properly belonged to the Conference to regulate, viz., the manner in which their *consent* should be applied for and obtained; "every application for such *consent* shall be first made at the district meeting; and if it obtain their sanction, shall be then referred to a committee of the Conference." Any leaders' meeting might, in like manner, pass a regulation, stating in what manner, and upon what terms, they would give their *consent* in any matter, which it required the consent of a leaders' meeting to carry into effect.

Let us now glance at a few of the leading FACTS of the Leeds case, as admitted in the accredited documents; and see, whether a spirit of most determined wrong has not dictated



all those measures, which have led to such unhappy results at Leeds, and have tarnished the character of the Methodist Conference. We say the character of the Conference reluctantly, Sir! because we are fully aware, that it is your party to whom the odium of those measures properly belongs. We are still willing to hope, that there may be found in the Methodist Conference, virtue to perform the only redeeming act, which yet remains to them, viz., to put down this party; to renounce their principles; and recall their measures. By such an act alone can they set themselves right with the religious public, assert their own independence, and save the Connexion.

The plain facts of the Leeds case, then, are as follow. A few trustees, and others, wished to have an organ in Brunswick chapel, Leeds. For this purpose a paper was drawn up, purporting to be a petition or request from the seat-holders to the trustees, to erect such organ; when the acting trustees thought they had signatures enough to justify their taking up the matter, they applied to the superintendant of the circuit. Mr. Stanley advised the proper Methodistical course, viz. to apply to the leaders' meeting for their sanction. The matter on being introduced to the leaders' meeting, met with very strong opposition, and a large majority decided against the erection of an organ, on the ground that it would impair that simplicity of worship, which they had ever maintained. There is, in the minds of many of our most pious and experienced leaders, an apprehension which you may, perhaps, regard as a weak prejudice,—viz. that exterior pomp and mundane splendour add nothing to the value of religious services in the estimation of Him to whom they are addressed; and that these meretricious appendages of public worship generally accompany, if they do not indicate, the decay of piety in the Christian church. Here, then, on the principle of the Plan of Pacification, and on every principle of good sense and equity, the affair ought to have dropped; the voice of the church and the law of Methodism ought to have been respected; these, however, were authorities to which the pride of the organ party could not submit; they had interest with some of the preachers; and, acting on advice which ought never to have been given, they determined on overstepping the Leaders' Meeting and the Quarterly Meeting, by an application to the District Meeting. The superintendant of Leeds was chairman of the district; he knew that the opposition to the organ was very strong, and that the measure was therefore a dangerous one. At the District Meeting, accordingly, the trustees were mortified by a second defeat! The District Meeting, so improperly appealed to, refused their sanction. Surely the matter ought now to have ended; for, as we have shown at length in our Address to the Conference, (p. 31,) no application could be made, by the law

of 1820, for the consent of the Conference, unless the consent of the District Meeting had been *first* obtained. The pertinacious application for this latter consent, might alone have been deemed a sufficient insult to the leaders' meeting and the Leeds people. But the pride of the human heart, and especially the pride of party, is not so easily overcome. To deck out and adorn the services of a Methodist chapel, in all the pomp and parade which the Established Church has borrowed from the pride of Rome, is an object as dear to certain preachers as it appears to have been to certain trustees of Brunswick Chapel. With such preachers, therefore, the organ party had a common interest, and the influence of the former, in the Methodist Conference, was deemed fully adequate to accomplish any object they might undertake. Suffice it to say, that an application was made to the Conference for leave to erect the organ! The strongest remonstrances were made against it, on behalf of the Leeds people; but the Conference, in defiance of these remonstrances, in contempt of the decision of the Leaders' Meeting, and of the District Meeting; and in the very teeth of the Plan of Pacification, of their own law of 1820, and of the Trust Deeds of the chapels, granted such leave!

The leave thus granted by the Conference, did not still justify the erection of the organ. The *consent* of the Leaders' Meeting was indispensable, by the laws of Methodism. That consent could never be obtained. The organ, therefore, now standing in the Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, is a monument of the ascendancy of a turbulent faction, and of the overthrow of the laws and liberties of the Methodist Connexion. And mark the spirit of the men, who have thus exalted themselves. The organ has since been opened with a pomp and parade unparalleled in Methodism;—Mr. Wesley, the celebrated organist, was called down from London; popular preachers were engaged; the whole county was insulted with this unholy triumph of a few individuals, over one of our oldest and most venerable societies; hand-bills were posted in all the neighbouring towns: in Manchester, and even in London, we saw placards a yard in length, and printed in the largest and boldest characters!

To expect that men, raised in any degree above the condition of abject slavery, should patiently submit to treatment so injurious and degrading;—to anticipate peace in the Leeds societies after all these multiplied wrongs, were only to betray gross ignorance of human nature. Accordingly we find that, immediately after the Conference of 1827, the greatest disorders prevailed in these Societies. Before the new superintendent was settled in his office, irregular meetings were held, the avowed objects of which were to oppose, as far as possible, the injustice which had been sanctioned, and to compel the

preachers to respect the rights of the people. This was perfectly natural! What else could the Leeds people do? We admit, that the proceedings of these meetings were very extraordinary; and, in ordinary circumstances, they would have been very unjustifiable. For this reason we declined any attempt to justify them. In our Address to the Conference, p. 4, we were careful to distinguish between the disputes at Leeds, and the proceedings of the Special District Meeting thereon. We confined our attention to the latter subject, and treated the question solely in a constitutional point of view.

In forming our judgment, however, of these irregular proceedings of the Leeds brethren, we cannot overlook two important considerations.

I. That on the matter in dispute, all law and rule, moral and Methodistical, had been overturned and trampled under foot, by their opponents, the trustees, the preachers, and the Conference. The law being thus at an end, we cannot see how their proceedings, whatever they might be, could be deemed illegal; for where there is no law, there can be no transgression; we, of course, confine this remark to the parties in dispute. The Methodist public may, and perhaps will, condemn, to a certain extent, both parties. But the Conference and the preachers can have no right to question the acts of the Leeds brethren; we cannot admit their privilege to break the laws of the Connexion at pleasure, and then to call upon the people to obey them. Before their complaints can be listened to, they must come into court with clean hands. Rom. ii. 1, 3, 21.

2. Whatever these proceedings might be, and however injurious to Methodism, they might have been put an end to at any time, by a simple act of justice on the part of the new superintendant. Their sole object was to prevent the erection of the organ, until all parties could have fair play. This is proved by the very moderate and conciliatory proposals made to Mr. Grindrod, on the 13th October, 1827, which were,—

“I. That all preparations towards the erection of the organ shall be immediately suspended, and shall continue so until after the next Conference.

“II. That the Leaders’ Meeting, and Quarterly Meeting, shall have full power to address Conference, on any of the subjects in dispute; and that their memorials shall be read in full Conference.

“III. That brother Johnson, and all the brethren united with him, in both circuits, shall, as a matter of course, resume their work and station, immediately after the next quarter day.”

This, Sir, is not an hour of the day in which men should be afraid to speak out, and to utter a little plain truth in the ears of Methodist preachers. The reply of Mr. Grindrod to the above more than equitable propositions, in which the par-

ties still submit the question to the Conference, and claim not half their right, renders him and his advisers responsible to God and to Methodism for all the consequences which followed. He replied, that "he could not interfere with the erection of the organ," and insolently talked to these injured and respectable men, about "confessing the fault they had committed, and promising to observe Methodist discipline in future!" And you, Sir, in coming forward to apologize for these lawless proceedings, have "placed yourself, indeed, in an unpleasant position before the Connexion." It is in vain that you employ a prostituted rhetoric to gloss over these positive violations of Methodistical law, these acts of insulting and degrading oppression and wrong. You may talk of "a dead and corrupt branch hanging upon the common stock, and defended from all pruning and propping;" but we must beg leave to remind you, that many of the precious souls, whom you thus "pruned and lopped," went out of the Societies, making their solemn appeal to HIM, who saw in that day the anguish of their spirits, and who will surely require a recompence!

All these proceedings we beheld, and kept silence; we entered not into the merits of the Leeds case. To the Leeds people we left the defence of their own liberties. It belonged not to us to give advice, although we should, doubtless, have adopted a very different course ourselves, if similarly situated. We did not feel ourselves called upon to interfere, and certainly never should have interfered in the controversy on this subject, if we had not seen, what was worse than all the rest, viz. that the proceedings of this Special District Meeting were detailed, defended, and published, with the sanction of the President and Secretary of the Conference, as a new code of discipline for the Methodist Connexion.

IV. The design and practical result of this new code of discipline, are to convert the preachers of a district into a cohort of flying police, that may be readily convened on any given spot, and on the call of any superintendant who may chance to find himself in a minority, on some question which he is determined to carry, in defiance of the local authorities: and in which he conceives, or has ascertained beforehand, (the Leeds superintendant went to Manchester before he called the district meeting,) that his brethren in the ministry will be well pleased to support him. This district meeting, or court of police, aware that it is no question of Methodist doctrine, nor even of morality, which they are called on to support, (for these matters are otherwise and effectually secured in Methodism; and any alarm in relation to them exists only in your suppositious cases, which we shall handle anon,) but simply one of ministerial power and authority; in which, if it can be carried



against the people, they shall all be equal sharers, are instructed in the first place to declare that they are assembled on "an extraordinary emergency," for the preservation of Methodism! This "emergency," as we have stated in our Address to the Conference, may mean any thing or nothing, no matter what! It is the declaration of the Special District Meeting, which is not to be examined or questioned by any authority on the part of the people! It may simply be, that the superintendant has been found in a minority; or, that a leaders' meeting, being dissatisfied with the proof, would not convict on evidence which he thought sufficient! Nay, it should seem, from the first resolution of the Leeds Special District Meeting, that it is sufficient to declare, that an extraordinary emergency "*is now alleged to exist.*" It makes no difference either, that all the emergency is occasioned by the conduct of the preachers themselves! And you have not, in your Address to us, ventured to say a single word in defence of those palpable violations of law, on the part of the Conference and the superintendant, out of which alone the "extraordinary emergency" at Leeds arose. This emergency once declared, however, the Special District Meeting is instantly invested "with full powers" to suspend all ordinary laws; to summon before it all the local meetings in succession; to tender them a new test of moral and Methodistical qualification; and to declare that the minority, however small, which adheres to the superintendant, is the *sound*, and the majority, however great, the *unsound*, part of the Society. This sound minority are to be rewarded for their taint subser-viency, by a few sugar-plum resolutions; and the unsound majority, who have displayed some conscience in maintaining the liberties of the church, are to be overwhelmed with a torrent of indiscriminate abuse, as factious, disaffected, and in actual rebellion against their superintendant! Finally, the district meeting are "to act and decide" in the whole business, not according to any known and acknowledged rules, but simply "as to them may seem right and necessary." These "actings and decidings" present a very strange medley. Facts and principles, illustrations and reasonings, are jumbled together, to prepare the mind for novel and interested expositions of Methodistical law and Christian obligation. The offenders are to be distinguished and classed, according to various degrees of delinquency; and a nicely adjusted scale is presented of reproof, warning, threatening, suspension, expulsion, and anathema; which, like the offences charged, are not brought home to A. B. and C., but are levelled, indiscriminately, against whole classes of offenders! The whole was to be a sweeping affair! It commenced practically with the exclusion of between thirty and forty leaders, many of whom had taken no part whatever, direct or indirect, with those whom you are

pleased to call disaffected; but whose sole offence was their refusal to subscribe the new test. A simple and undeniable fact this, Sir, which should have prevented any man of conscience, or feeling, from taking any part with the men who perpetrated the Leeds business! Add to all this the votes of commendation and thanks, and the servile resolutions contained in the Appendix, and you have all that was proper and fitting to wind up the farce, and to grace the grand result which must ever attend such proceedings, a most extensive and wide-spreading division of the Societies.

And who are the men, we would ask, whom you have thus excluded from the temple of God? Are they infidels, heretics, blasphemers, perverters of the truth, and enemies of the Saviour? Are they liars, thieves, adulterers, unclean persons, and injurious? You know, Sir, that they neither hold the truth in unrighteousness, nor dishonour their profession! You know, that of the one thousand souls thus cut off from the Societies, most of them, and, for any thing you can prove or dare allege, all of them, are the precious members of Christ! You know, or at least your brethren at Leeds know, that they were no sooner thrust out from the synagogue, than the Saviour met them, and comforted them; that his Spirit continues with them even unto this day; that he fills their assemblies with his presence and power, and renders their means of grace, both public and private, effectual to the conversion of souls, and to the edification of them that believe! These are facts so universally known and acknowledged, that you dare not attempt a denial of them! It was wise, it was prudent, it was exceedingly judicious in you, Sir, to omit all reference to the facts of the Leeds case. Those facts, whether they relate to the origin, the progress, or the results of that dispute, stand so diametrically opposed to your main object, that you did not even dare, with all your peculiar talent in this line, to risk an attempt at bending and twisting them to your purpose! They must be put altogether out of sight; and until the attention of the public can be wholly diverted from them, you are evidently aware, that neither apology nor excuse can be made for the conduct of the Special District Meeting and the Conference, in relation to the Leeds case! All Scripture, all reason, and experience, and, as we have contended, and shall contend, all that is fundamental and practical in Methodism, concurs to condemn that conduct.

It is no apology for these proceedings, to tell us that you only expelled the principals, and that the rest excluded themselves. There is a relation between the leader and his flock, which cannot exist between them and any other minister or pastor. The leader is the man whose life and conversation they are best acquainted with, and which they have the most frequent opportunities of comparing with the Scripture standard. They

know his faith, his spirit, his zeal;—his diligence, disinterestedness, and love. He is, in many instances, the man who first cared for their souls, and gathered them into the fold. Your public ministrations may have answered all the ends for which they were designed; but, according to our system, your intercourse with the people is brief and transitory. You speedily pass away, in all probability to return no more; but the leader is the pastor, who, assuming no authority or influence, save that of love, and spurning any other hire, watches incessantly for their souls, as he who must give a peculiar account. To the leader, then, if he be a faithful man, (and such were the men whom you have expelled,) the hearts of the people are knit; they entrust to him continually the secret of their souls; and, with happy and well-placed confidence, tell him all their hopes, their fears, their sorrows, and their joys. They unfold to him all their cares, conflicts, temptations, and trials; he knows their character, their situation in life, their peculiar besetments, and constitutional infirmities. From him they gratefully and affectionately receive instruction and counsel, consolation and comfort, reproof and warning, exhortation and encouragement; in short, all that can tend to the edification of their souls in faith, in knowledge, in holiness, and love. If, then, there be any power in love, or any love in the church of God, it must prevail here, to knit together the hearts of the leader and his people, as the heart of one man. To attempt the removal of a leader, therefore, upon any questionable ground, is at all times a dangerous experiment; but when, as in the Leeds case, there was no allegation of false doctrine, no suspicion of immorality, when the sole question was, whether leaders and people should be compelled to bow down to the new idol of lawless power, the people must have wanted hearts indeed, if they had not firmly adhered to the men, who, under the great Head of the Church, were the true shepherds and bishops of their souls!

V. Returning now from this long but important digression, we have but to remind you, that the question discussed in Part I. of the London South Address, related exclusively to the Methodistical right and authority of the Special District Meeting to interfere with the local authorities at Leeds, in the manner set forth in their printed Resolutions. That question is thus stated in the first sentence of this part of our Address: “That *Travelling Preachers alone* are, “by the present constitution of Methodism, amenable to “special district meetings; and that the application of the “judicial and inquisitorial powers of such meetings, to officers “and members of societies, is a novel and unauthorized extension of their jurisdiction, will appear by a simple re-

“ference to the rules of Conference, authorizing and empowering such meetings.” In reviewing these laws, we launched out into no “new theories”; we indulged in no “speculations”; we brought forward no indefinite and indiscriminate charges; we seized no “new topics of factious declamation;” nor did we “under pretence of bringing us back to what is *old* in Methodism, covertly endeavour to bring in what is *new*, and essentially opposed to our bond of union; and then factiously endeavour to disturb our societies by their publication.” When you penned these sentences against us, you must have been fully aware that there was not the slightest foundation for them. Let the reader turn to the eight pages which comprise Part I. of our Address, and to which you have confined your attack; and let him judge for himself, whether a more close, connected, legitimate, and conclusive argument were ever presented to the public. We, indeed, are not surprised at your saying these things; for we are well aware, that this method of treating your opponents constitutes at once the character and the strength of your party. “Throw dirt enough, and some will be sure to stick!” Nor can we be offended at it; because, with all men of candour and common sense, it will be a proof of your weakness, and will induce them to throw down your book, as one of gross abuse, and wilful misrepresentation!

When we first heard of the proceedings of the Special District Meeting at Leeds, we were at a loss to know on what law of Methodism they had grounded their right of interference. Long and intimately acquainted with the Plan of Pacification, and the Concessions and Code of laws of 1797, we were perfectly aware that none of these *fundamental* statutes of the Connexion afforded the least countenance to such an interference. On the contrary, to our apprehension, they appeared to be framed for the express purpose of securing the liberties of the local authorities from any such encroachment of power on the part of the district meetings, and travelling preachers, by stripping the former of all authority, “but a bare negative;” and making, “on the part of the whole body of the latter, the largest sacrifices in respect of authority.”

The resolutions, however, of the Special District Meeting no sooner appeared, than we perceived that they had founded all their authority on certain miscellaneous regulations of the year 1797, relating to district committees; and that, in order to render these regulations subservient to their purpose, they had distorted and perverted them in the manner exemplified in the *second* part of our Address! Never was a case made out against public men more unanswerable; never was there exhibited on the part of Christian ministers an abuse of discipline less justifiable. In proof of this, Sir, is your silence! You have not a word to say in defence of your brethren, on a sin-



gle point raised and discussed in Part II. of the London South Address !

But the subject was too important to be rested on a mere exposure of the perversion of a rule. The question, whether special district meetings had authority to overawe, and control, in any cases whatever, the local jurisdiction of the circuits, presented a great constitutional question in Methodism. As we have remarked in our Address, p. 27, "this was the first great and general attempt to systematize and consolidate the *judicial* power of special district meetings, in *local* affairs." As this attempt, then, was founded on the rules relating to special district meetings, we deemed it necessary to overturn the "baseless fabric," by collecting and reviewing all the laws of Conference relating to such meetings, with the view of showing that they conveyed no such authority, and conferred no such jurisdiction, as had been claimed and exercised at Leeds. The method we took, was to set down, under the several years of their enactment, a true and literal copy of the rules made in each successive year from the commencement of district meetings. To the regulations thus set down, under each year, we applied certain universally received rules of construction, derived from the maxims of the civil law. These rules are nothing more than the collective wisdom and common sense of mankind, expressed in self-evident propositions. They are equally applicable to all laws, civil, ecclesiastical, and municipal. They have been acknowledged and adopted by all civilized nations; and, like the tried proverbs of mankind, have passed current in every age. Under the Conference regulations of each year, we have added a few remarks in application of these simple rules of construction; but these remarks, it will be perceived, except when successively repeated, apply only to the regulations of that particular year, under which they are ranged. It is necessary to note this, because, by applying one or two of these remarks more generally, you have endeavoured to pervert their meaning, and to render the argument ridiculous.

Now we ask, Sir, whether any course of argument could be more fair and just, more candid and honourable? The reader has the rules before him, and can judge for himself as to their sense and meaning. We did not think it either fair or honourable to do as you have done, to pick out detached sentences from the rules, and interpolate them in our text, that they might carry with them some particular gloss which might serve our purpose better than the rule itself. In every case we have given the rule entire and distinct. Our own remarks we have confined to separate paragraphs; and have left them to stand or fall, in the judgment of the reader, according to their own merits. Here, then, Sir, there is no attack upon Methodism; nor upon the Conference; nor on the laws of the

Connexion. We take the laws relating to special district meetings as we find them. We have no quarrel with them whatever; we inquire not into their validity, their propriety, or fitness. Our whole question is simply one of construction; What do these laws mean? What authority do they convey? Any general argument on the policy or tendencies of these laws is employed by us only in relation to your construction. Yet to read your book, one must really suppose that there exists, in this circuit, a party who are seeking, by dark and disingenuous methods, to overturn the system and destroy Methodism! It is your studied purpose to fix this impression on the minds of your readers! You do not merely insinuate this from page to page, but there are passages in which it is directly asserted. We shall not stop to refute so base a slander, nor to inquire how you could stoop to retail it. Our knowledge of the character of your party, and the abusive resolutions both of the Leeds Special District Meeting, and of the late Conference, led us to expect that we should be treated as the off-scouring of all things. But we undertook all these labours, and have braved all this contumely and reproach in defence of the liberties of the Methodist Connexion. We saw and felt, as thousands of others at this moment do, that it was high time to make a stand, and to give a check to your encroachments; and notwithstanding the great anxiety of yourself and your brethren to give out, that with the most intelligent and charactered members of the body, our address and resolutions "meet a most unequivocal condemnation;"\* yet, under this sickly colouring, there is an uneasy soreness, which betrays the truth. Do these intelligent and charactered members approve the Leeds business? Have several of the first and most important circuits, who have as yet taken no part in the discussions, been backward to express their opinion on this case, when it has been proposed at their Quarterly Meeting, to invite to their circuits

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\* This empty boast, that all "the most intelligent and charactered members" are enlisted in your train, forcibly reminds us of the following passage from Lord Bacon:—

"The church never wanted a kind of persons, which love the salutation of Rabbi, master; not in ceremony or compliment, but in an inward authority which they seek over men's minds, in drawing them to depend upon their opinions, and to seek knowledge at their lips. These men are the true successors of Diotrophes, the lover of pre-eminence. Such spirits do light upon another sort of natures, which do adhere to these men; 'quorum gloria in obsequio;' stiff followers, and such as zeal marvellously for those whom they have chosen for their masters. This latter sort, for the most part, are men of young years, and superficial understanding, carried away with partial respect of persons, or with the enticing appearance of godly names and pretences; 'Pauci res ipsas sequuntur, plures nomina rerum, plurimi nomina magistrorum,' 'few follow the things themselves, more the names of the things, and most the names of their masters.'" Works, vol. ii. p. 492.

preachers who figured most conspicuously in the Leeds business? We aver, that amongst your most zealous friends, who, in compassion to you, would have us be silent, we have not met with one who would undertake to defend you through all the parts of that case. Neither, when disabused of your sophistries, will they by any means admit the principles on which you found the new jurisdiction and powers of special district meetings. It requires time, however, before so large a body of people can be brought to examine the character, and estimate the tendencies, of a new principle; a few more special district meetings, interfering with local affairs, would do all that is required. If we desired the overthrow of the Conference, as you seem to intimate, we could wish nothing more, than that you should go on, Sir, and carry into practical effect the principles which you have laid down. It required six years after Mr. Wesley's death, to rouse the Connexion to the assertion of their liberties; but, if you would not be quite so sparing of your labours in this way, if you would be so kind as to assist us with a few more displays of your newly assumed powers, it would not require half that time to induce the Connexion to resume those liberties. In the mean time, we await the issue with but one feeling of apprehension, which we have expressed in the conclusion of our Address to the Conference, viz., that when the crisis comes, and the long obstructed torrent bursts, it may sweep away more than we should wish to see destroyed. As, however, you are the authors of that "root of bitterness," which has sprung up in the Connexion, so you must bear the responsibility and the blame! no apprehension of consequences, which may by possibility result from your obstinate and pertinacious adherence to your novel, unscriptural, and anti-Methodistical claims, will deter reasonable and intelligent men from asserting their own rights, and defending the liberties of the church! Our own circuit we have protected by our seventh resolution, and, as to our characters and proceedings, we commend them to the judgment of the Methodist Connexion. That Connexion alone can be the judges; for, notwithstanding you are fond of an appeal to the Methodist Conference, as to an immaculate tribunal, yet we must remind you, that in this case, the Conference is strongly interested and deeply committed. The clergy have ever thought it a fine thing, both to legislate and to decide judicially on their own claims and pretensions. But this will hardly go down in the present day. The Leeds case is a sufficient illustration of the folly and injustice of permitting the Conference to annex a judicial authority to their legislative power, over the people; we have denied the existence of such an authority in the Conference; and we have rested that denial, not on speculative grounds, but on the *fundamental* laws of the Connexion. In thus appealing to

the judgment of the public, we find our own construction of those laws so strengthened and confirmed by your very tortuous, crooked, and perverse attempts to overturn it, that we can have no fears as to the result.

VI. Entering now on a more particular consideration of your pamphlet, we find, that it consists of two parts of equal extent. The first part is elaborately wrought out as an introductory essay; and is well adapted to gain on the uninformed and unsuspecting reader, and to prepare him for the constructive reasonings which follow, in the second part of the Address. Thus, one half of your book is expended in general and speculative argumentation; detailing and enforcing your *newly adopted* views of the rights of ministers, of church government, and of other matters with which we profess to have nothing to do! It is not until you reach the middle of page 16, that you feign even the appearance of coming to the only real question at issue; viz., the true construction and meaning of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, relative to special district meetings. In this second part of your pamphlet, your lucubrations affect, indeed, a more direct bearing on the right of special district meetings, to interfere in local affairs of the circuits; and you set out by quoting a few detached and mutilated sentences from the rules of 1797. But even here, you treat these rules as the infidels have always treated the Bible, for the reader must be blind, indeed, not to perceive, that you quote them, not by any means to illustrate the original meaning and proper signification, but for the purpose of bolstering up, and rendering plausible, your novel theory of ministerial power and church government. You are aware, Sir, that, according to this method of arguing, any thing that it entereth into the mind of man to conceive, may be proved from either Bible or Statute Book! And yet, wretched and disingenuous as is this appeal to the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, you cannot support it through two pages before you fly off, to tell us in what an unpleasant situation we have placed ourselves before the Connexion! Then follow several pages more of general and desultory argumentation, until we reach p. 22, where you again quote one of the rules. In the very next paragraph, however, you have again slipped off from the rules, to combat our assertions about Mr. Wesley's power, and his Deed of Declaration! Thus you proceed, from page to page, arguing, not on the direct meaning of the rules, but on the propriety, policy, and necessity of the right for which you contend. The result is, that in a pamphlet of thirty-one pages, we have certainly not more than six that have any bearing on these rules, the true object and signification whereof is, with us, the only subject of dispute! The



remaining four-fifths of your Address is expended in dogmatizing on the advantages which, as a Connexion, we enjoy, in comparison of independent churches; on the inherent rights of ministers; on their power to rule the church; on the constitutional powers of the Conference; on the blessings of a court of appeal, which, as in the Leeds case, excludes one party from being present at all, and makes the other party judge in his own cause! on the advantages of a common, that is, an absolute, government; and on other questions of church policy and Methodistical discipline, equally foreign to the question of construction, raised in our Address to the Conference! Simplicity, Sir, is the character, and, generally, the criterion of truth! Had truth been your object, you would never have been at the pains of mixing for us that dish of *hotchpot* which your book presents. But it is evident, that your whole design was to beguile the unwary, and to confound the ignorant, that you might the more firmly establish that despotism, for submission to which you formerly, from under the truant standard of a rival Connexion, bitterly lampooned and satirized your present friends!

You remind us, (p. 5.) "we did not, my brethren, create Methodism. That honour is not ours; we found it, or rather it found us; we were welcomed with kindness within its refuge; and we have sat in spiritual safety beneath its shadow." In relation to us, this is true; and we are grateful for the benefits received. It is doubly true with regard to you, for you have more than once been welcomed with kindness within its refuge; and we are sorry to say, that this is not the first time you have repaid the kindness, by attacking, with all your energy, its hallowed foundations! What other motive could induce you to moot the fundamental questions discussed in your Address, in reply to us, who had so strongly avowed our attachment to the present system, and declared that we wished for no change?—to us, who had so carefully restricted ourselves to a dry question of construction, and founded all our complaints against the proceedings and resolutions of the Leeds Special District Meeting, on the fact, that they were gross and manifest violations of the existing laws of the Connexion?—in reply to us, Sir, we repeat, who, strongly deprecating all such discussion, had "carefully abstained from all unnecessary remarks on the powers of the Conference;" and had earnestly warned you of the danger of awakening attention unnecessarily to the fundamental principles of our constitution?—See conclusion of London South Address, pp. 37, 38. Could any attempt be fraught with greater danger to the Connexion? If you take upon yourself, with so much authority, to discuss the first principles of our constitution, and with the interested and ambitious view of establishing an absolute government in the Conference, and in special district

meetings; can it be expected that others will remain silent, or that they will appeal, with less zeal and confidence, to those principles in opposition to these haughty claims? The danger is enhanced, inasmuch as you have thought yourself at liberty to discuss these principles, without a single scrap of authority, either from Scripture, from the primitive fathers, from Mr. Wesley, or from the early writings and controversies of the Connexion! It is all broad assertion and presumptuous speculation; and assertion and speculation will be just as good on one side of the question as on the other! You affect a cry of alarm about your consciences and your spiritual powers; but here is a cause of real alarm! If the Connexion is to be thrown into confusion on these first principles;—if, dissatisfied with the express stipulations of 1795 and 1797, you are to found new claims, and to set up a new and arbitrary jurisdiction, on general arguments, derived from the fact of our being a Connexion, from the inherent rights of ministers, and on what you construe into tacit and implied consent, who will admit, that you and your brethren are to be the sole expounders of such matters?—who amongst us, will consent to barter the rights and privileges for which our fathers contended, in exchange for your sophistries, unsupported as they are by any authority, scriptural or Methodistical? What other result can follow a course so impolitic, but that a host of men will rise up as in 1795, in defence of the liberties of the Connexion; and opposing fact to theory, reason to sophistry, and authority to speculation, again involve us in conflicts, disputes, and divisions? Assuredly, your avowed and open attempts to shake the foundations of Methodism, and overturn the system in 1805, were far less dangerous than the secret and subtle tendencies of your late publication!

You must be fully aware, and we, Sir, are not insensible, that the eyes of the whole Connexion are turned towards this question, with anxious and increasing interest. They will not expect us to allow the dangerous speculations which occupy the whole of the first, and by far the greater portion of the second, part of your pamphlet to pass unnoticed; and yet we must protest in the face of all men, against this Circuit being charged with the folly and imprudence of having involved or invoked any such discussion. We cannot, indeed, and we will not, consent that these injudicious and injurious discussions, so artfully introduced by you, should be mixed up and confounded with our simple question on the construction of the miscellaneous regulations of 1797. Your attempt to blend questions so distinct, is a sufficient proof, that you had no answer to give to the London South Address; and a plain confession, that you felt yourself so hardly pressed by the argument on the construction of these rules, that you were willing to extricate yourself at any risk; for you were

fully aware of the danger of opening these fundamental questions. You tell us, (p. 31.) "when party spirit is excited in the church, some minds are sure to suffer spiritual loss, and some souls must be endangered." Yet, all this you risk, to avoid being convicted of a flagrant violation of rule! But who will be blinded by this attempt? Who does not perceive your object and your motive? You know well, that the constitution of Christian churches, the inherent rights of ministers, and the authority of councils, conclaves, synods, conventions, and congregations, have furnished inexhaustible sources of dispute and controversy, ever since the institutions of Christianity have been connected with wealth, honour, power, and patronage! Methodism, poor and despised in its origin and early progress, was happily saved from this source of calamitous strife and debate, by the prudence and piety of its Founder; who, destitute of preconceived plan or system, was contented to follow at every step the openings of Providence. We, ourselves, had too much regard for so divine a work, recklessly to launch it on this sea of troubles. We left that task to its more questionable friends; and the temptation has, it seems, become too strong for you! You felt that, whilst confined to a practical question on the construction of a certain class of rules, you could do nothing; being concluded and shut up under the law. If, however, you can be permitted to break loose, and bound into this wide field of interminable controversy, you doubt not but you shall be able to rove and prance about, like a colt in the wilderness, that proudly snorts at the approach of man, and feels but little apprehension of being driven into a corner, and having a bit thrust into his mouth. The present controversy, in that case, like that between episcopacy, presbyterianism, and independency, can only end in every man's retaining his own opinion; and in posterity itself being unable to determine, who were in the right and who in the wrong. "Some minds are sure to suffer spiritual loss, and some souls must be endangered," but what of that? You will have escaped your present dilemma!

Adhering then closely to the original question, discussed in the Address of the London South Circuit to the last Conference; we shall proceed to select those arguments which you have employed in relation to the miscellaneous regulations of 1797. We shall inquire how far they affect our construction of those regulations; and how far, indeed, any construction you may choose to put upon these regulations, can be admitted to prejudice and overturn the Concessions and Code of Laws of that year. Having replied to these arguments, and enforced and established our own construction, we shall have discharged our duty. The question raised by the London South Circuit extends no further. Any notice which we may afterwards take of your elaborate dissertation, not on what Methodism is, or ever has been, but on what you would wish it to become,

however important and interesting to others, will be regarded by us as of a less serious character. It will be designed rather as an antidote to some of your errors, than as a discussion of the constitution of Methodism, and of those other topics which you have so plausibly introduced.

VII. As introductory to our review of the Rules of Conference, relative to special district meetings, and as furnishing an important, but by no means an essential or necessary, evidence of their true import and design, we stated two facts, which we did suppose no man would have attempted to deny or controvert, in the face of the Methodist Connexion. Having remarked, that district meetings, *ordinary* as well as *special*, were unknown to the Connexion during Mr. Wesley's life; that for nearly fifty years after the commencement of Methodism they had no existence; and that, during this period, leaders' meetings, local preachers' meetings, and quarterly meetings, had become universally established and acknowledged;—remarks which you do not attempt to question;—we go on to state,—“During this period, the judicial power of the Conference had been limited and confined (according to the 8th Article of the Deed of Declaration of the 28th of February, 1784, by which Mr. Wesley defined the powers of the Conference) to the trial and expulsion of members of the Conference admitted into Connexion, or upon trial. They had never presumed, nor been allowed, to cite at their bar the local officers and members of society; such a citation was never heard of; nor can it be believed, that at this period any leaders' meeting would have lent its authority to compel any of its members to appear, and answer charges, before either the Conference or a special district meeting. The leaders' meetings always retained, in their own hands, the inalienable right of the church to try its own members; a right distinctly recognized in the New Testament, and uniformly exercised in the primitive church. The Conference has the same right as to its own members, but not being of itself a church, it could not pretend to the right of trying the members of any church.”

The bare mention of the two facts, that the judicial power of the Conference had been limited to its own members, and that the leaders' meeting had always retained the right of trying their own members, appears to move you from all your propriety; and you cast about the symbols of your wrath to an excess which is somewhat ludicrous! It was necessary to get over these two facts in one way or another; and, therefore, we have, in the first place, a string of epithets, and a world of abuse, highly befitting the subject and the occasion! We are accused of having “unwittingly adopted the sophistry;” “a more dishonest attempt was never made to impose on un-



suspecting men;" "it is hard to suppose he could do it ignorantly;" "how disingenuous to bolster up a futile argument;" "equally culpable assertion;" "there is no discovery here;" &c. &c.; for these are not all the *affectionate* terms with which you have contrived to stud and adorn a single paragraph of your very "*affectionate* Address!" But now for the argument. Let us hear what you have to oppose to these equally culpable assertions.

Transposing the order of our facts, you tell us, p. 23, "The writer of your Address either knew, or ought to have known, that Mr. Wesley, and the superintendants after him, although they took counsel of others, as wishing only to employ their power righteously, yet had the power, and often exercised it, to admit, expel, and remove from office, without any reference to such meetings at all." This is so much broad assertion, Sir; but in stating the fact, we challenged the production of some authority. It is clear you have none to produce; no case which you can cite. Here, then, you are answered; for our assertion is as good as yours. It is, indeed, much better; for we assert nothing "without proof;" "for we would not follow so bad an example" as you have set us. Take, then, the proof of our assertion.

"The preachers have EVER appointed leaders, chosen stewards, and admitted members into, and expelled them from, the society, *consulting their brethren, the leaders and stewards.*"—*Minutes of Conference, 1794*, 8vo. edit. vol. i. p. 299.

"It has been our *general custom* NEVER to appoint or remove a leader or steward, *without first consulting the leaders* and stewards of the society, and we are resolved to walk by the same rule." Addenda to the Plan of Pacification—*Minutes of Conference, 1795*, vol. i. p. 325.

Observe, Sir, that both the above citations occur in the Minutes of Conference, held previous to 1797; and yet you have the face to tell us, "no such right was ever given to the meetings before 1797! Nay, this power in superintendants was the point complained of when what you call the Constitution was settled, as appears from so many plain words, which no one can mistake; and was the very thing conceded by the Conference to those local meetings *for the first time!*" Where are the plain words, which no one can mistake? We asserted, that the leaders "*always*" retained this right. The Conference declare they have "*ever*" consulted—that it has been their custom "*NEVER*" to appoint or remove, &c. without first consulting, &c. Did you ever read the Plan of Pacification, Sir? We ask this question because, if you had carefully read that document yourself (which may be doubted), and did not implicitly follow some unfaithful guide (which we fear), you must have seen, "that the right which you say was first given to leaders' meetings in 1797," was not, indeed, then "con-

ceded by the Conference *for the first time*," but that two years before it had been acknowledged by the Conference to have *ever* existed in those meetings, by "*general custom, and never departed from.*" We have borrowed your style and language on this occasion, to show you how ridiculous it is to affect to treat men as children, because you cannot answer them. But you were not ignorant, that in attempting to shake the main fact stated by us, you attempted to befool the understandings of your readers, and to overturn the existing practice and established usage of Methodism "*from the beginning.*" You knew very well, not only that Mr. Wesley, and the superintendant after him, constantly referred to and consulted the leaders' meeting on all such matters; but that the consultation was not a mockery of civility and courtesy, but a direct appeal to the sense and judgment of these meetings, who decided the matter by an effective vote. You knew that the point complained of in 1797 was not this pretended power of the superintendant, which in fact never existed; but it was that certain "heady and opinionated men," (we thank you for your vocabulary of terms,) amongst the preachers, began then to question the right of the leaders' meeting in this matter, and to set up those claims to spiritual power and authority, which "the giants" of 1795 and 1797 indignantly rejected, but which you have again the hardihood to revive and enforce. If, as you tell us, Mr. Wesley and the superintendant after him, thus acknowledged leaders' meetings, "as wishing only to employ their power righteously," how can you avoid the just inference, that your very great anxiety to get rid of this right, can only be "as wishing to employ your power *unrighteously!*"

But there is a deeper "sophistry" couched in this denial of the right of leaders' meetings, which we must not omit to mention. Of the power of Mr. Wesley and the superintendant after him, we shall, probably, treat hereafter. But Mr. Wesley and the superintendant, when they exercised this power, were then present with the Society, as its acknowledged ministers or pastors. Here then, Sir, you have nimbly skipped on one side to avoid the question, instead of meeting it. That question relates not to what a minister may do in a congregation or Society, over which he has a special charge; but to the right of a Corporation, like the Conference, or a district meeting, to interfere between the minister and his flock. The Conference was in full power under the Deed of 1784, for some years before the death of Mr. Wesley. Did they ever pretend to the right of stepping in betwixt him, or the superintendant, and the local authorities, during the intervals of their annual meeting? And why have you omitted all notice of our three remaining propositions; that this right of the church to try its own members is distinctly

recognized in the New Testament; that it was uniformly exercised in the primitive church; and that the Conference, not being a church, could not pretend to the right of trying the members of any church? "How disingenuous, then, in the face of so clear a fact, (a fact supported by uniform practice in Methodism, and fully admitted by several Conferences,) to assert the contrary, in order to bolster up a futile argument!"

On the remaining fact stated by us, we have still nothing better than broad assertion and vulgar abuse, without a shadow of proof; and an argument (if argument it may be called) still more ridiculous. We copy the passage literally. "Equally culpable is the assertion, 'that, during this period, the judicial power of the Conference itself had been *limited* and *confined*, (according to the eighth article of the Deed of Declaration of 1784, by which Mr. Wesley defined the powers of the Conference,) to the trial and expulsion of members of the Conference, admitted into connexion, or received on trial.' Now to '*define*,' is truly understood by your Address-writer to mean, to '*limit* or *confine*;' but in this article of the Deed there is no act of *limitation*. It is a clause to give power, not to define power. 'The Conference *shall* and *may* expel and put out any member thereof; &c.' The clause has nothing therefore to do with the question." Watson, p. 24.

Our first reflection, on reading this passage, naturally turned on the impossibility of supplying the defects of an early education by any after-acquired knowledge. Had you been instructed, in early life, in the common principles of English grammar, you could scarcely have committed the first blunder, with which this argument opens on the reader. There could be no necessity to tell us, that the English language is truly understood by our Address-writer; but if you had as truly understood the law of *ellipsis*, and the rule of syntax, which connects the relative with its antecedent, you could not have added "to *define*, is truly understood to mean, to limit or confine, but in this article of the Deed there is no act of limitation." You would have seen in a moment, that the antecedent of the relative "which," was "Deed of Declaration," and not the "eighth article" of that Deed; and that the plain grammatical structure of the sentence was, "according to the eighth article of the Deed of Declaration, by which *deed* (not by which *article*) Mr. Wesley *defined* the powers of the Conference." The argument, if you had temper to perceive it, is, that during the long period alluded to, the judicial power of the Conference had, in *fact* and *practice*, been limited and confined to their own members, and that this practice agreed with the power given them in the eighth article of the Deed of Declaration.

But the defects of early education, even in men who acquire

studious habits in after life, extend much beyond occasional blunders in grammar. It is by early discipline alone that the mind acquires that precision of thought and distinctness of ideas which distinguish the scholar; and while they adorn the pages of the classic writer, enable him both to adorn and instruct his country and his age. Here, then, we are mortified to perceive that your coin is counterfeit, and that the tinsel falls off on a single touch. We can assure you, Sir, that notwithstanding the gross abuse of your pamphlet, notwithstanding you have called in question, not merely our fairness and honesty, but even our sagacity and common sense, and have officiously undertaken "to correct our vanity;" yet it is with pain that we allude to defects, which constitute, probably, rather your misfortune than your fault. But self-defence is a duty, and truth requires that, in an important argument, a glaring fallacy should not be overlooked. Take, then, as a specimen, of which your book would furnish not a few, the description you have given of this eighth article of the Deed of Declaration. You say, "it is a clause to give power, not to define power." Now, it would be hardly necessary to remind any one else, that power given by deed or grant, does not signify *physical* power. It simply means *authority*. But what distinct notion can be formed of a grant of authority which is not defined? Suppose you call your servant, Sir, and say to him, "John, I give you authority;" without defining that authority in relation either to its subject or its object. Will he not inquire, "Authority, Sir! what to do?" You rejoin; "it is enough that I give you authority, I condescend not to define that authority; begone, and put it in force!" All this might appear very wonderful, and, if conveyed with your wonted gravity, very astounding to the poor fellow. But pray, Sir, how much authority do you think he would carry away with him? It is a maxim, with which you are evidently not acquainted, that "in order to give power you must define it; and where authority is not defined, none is given." The want of distinct ideas, arising from the defect we have mentioned, has led you into an absurdity which this maxim was designed to correct.

What is still more extraordinary and confused is, that in proof of your singular position, that "in this article of the Deed there is no act of limitation; it is a clause to give power, not to define power;" you immediately quote the language of the clause in which the power given is both limited and defined! Thus your proof flatly contradicts your argument! "The Conference shall and may expel and put out, (here is the definition of the authority,) any member thereof," (here is the limitation of the power). The authority then given by this clause is expressly (yes, Sir, *expressly too!*—Watson, p. 26) defined, as to its subject, to be the trial of preachers; and it is



as expressly limited, as to its objects, to the members of the Conference. Really, Sir, after this last specimen of your talents as a polemical writer, we do not wonder that none of the great men, who have successively been the subjects of attack from your pen, have ever condescended a reply. They wrote for fame and for posterity; and could not stoop to notice the momentary blaze of your crackling thorns!

We are, however, agreeably surprised to find that all this singular logic results in the following very candid admission. "No one need be told that the Conference never did try leaders and members before its own bar, but before the meetings it has appointed for that purpose." Strip this sentence of its wayward phraseology, and it concedes the whole question at issue. We shall not quarrel with you about words and phantasies. If it had been your humour to assert the right of the Emperor of China to try our leaders and members, the conceit would only have amused us, provided it had been followed by the admission, that he tried them, not at his own bar, but before the proper Methodistical meetings. We must remark, however, that it is certainly a new conceit in Methodism to assert, that leaders' meetings are the representatives of the Conference, "appointed by it for the trial of leaders and members." They unquestionably appeared in a different character in 1797, and were then recognized as the representatives of the people. In the Plan of Pacification they are regarded as "best qualified to give the sense," and "to testify the wish of the people;" and so far from regarding themselves as the agents of the Conference in 1797, they then set up their claim to this very right of trying their own members, not on behalf of, but in direct opposition to, the Conference; and this right, thus claimed, the Conference fully conceded them. But you seem to look back wistfully at the "olden time," and struggling hard to revive the absolute system, we are all to be treated as the vassals of the Conference! Notwithstanding the above admission, therefore, you proceed,—

"But that the Conference always had the power, appears from its having exercised it in former times, without any one dreaming that it went beyond its authority." Here again, Sir, is broad assertion; but when, where, did the Conference exercise these powers? You have just told us, that the Conference never did try leaders and members at its own bar; and you do not attempt to show that even district meetings ever exercised that power; you refer not to a single case; nay, at page 19, you ask us, "Did you ever know your officers or members tried, suspended, or expelled by the Conference, by a district meeting, or even by a superintendant, since 1797, on his own authority?" And you emphatically reply, "You never did!" Will you have the goodness to reconcile this alleged exercise of power, with this positive denial of it! Where are your authorities? We repeat the question:—When,



where, and through whom, were these powers exercised by the Conference in former times? Certainly the men of 1795 and 1797 were no dreamers; when special district meetings attempted, in their day, to exercise such a power, they rose up manfully, and put down the dangerous encroachment! But you persist, that the Conference always had this power,—

“From the very nature of its relation to the Societies as vested, by common consent, with the government of the whole body.” A very pretty argument, from which you may readily deduce any right, power, or pretension, which you may choose to set up against the liberties of the Connexion! What is there that a *common*, that is an *absolute*, government may not do? But, alas! Sir, the men of 1797 consented to no such thing. They demanded, and obtained from the Conference, the largest “sacrifices, in respect to authority, on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers;” nay, what is still more direct, this Conference declare, “Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our *executive government* into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings.” Minutes, vol. i., p. 376, 1797. Was this investing the Conference, “by *common consent*, with the government of the whole body?” We really are ashamed to be compelled to go on, before other churches and the world, exposing these sad perversions and tergiversations of a Methodist preacher! Government, Sir, must be according to law. The government of this nation has a relation to the whole body of the people. But what ministry would dare to interfere with the jurisdiction of the courts of judicature, or with the sacred right of trial by jury? Equally dangerous to the power of the Conference will be a continued interference, by special district meetings, with the local jurisdictions of the circuits!

“—————”, also from the Constitution of 1797, where it delegates its own powers to its president, to the chairman of the districts, and to the district committees to interfere in such cases, and to execute the laws.” Was ever effrontery carried further? There is not a word or a hint of any such delegation of power, in any part of the Constitution of 1797! All the phrases you have quoted, are from the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797; which have no more to do with “the Constitution of 1797,” than any other act of the same Conference, with which the delegates of that year had no concern! Whether these Miscellaneous Regulations contain any such delegation of power to interfere with the local jurisdictions; that is, whether they contradict and overturn the Concessions and Code of Laws of that year, is the question at issue, to which we shall presently return; but, in asserting any such delegation of power as above, you do but “beg the question,” in order to establish a breach of faith on the part of the Conference of 1797.

The two introductory facts, then, stated by us remain untouched. They relate not to district meetings, for they had then no existence; and this shows the folly of your last argu-

ment from the Constitution of 1797, which cannot apply to the period of which we spake. But "the Conference," as you tell us, "never did try leaders and members before its own bar." It had no such jurisdiction, nor any pretensions to this power; but, as the Conferences of 1794 and 1795 affirm, "It has always been the *general custom never* to appoint or remove a leader or steward, without first consulting the leaders and stewards." The leaders' meeting always retained in their own hands the inalienable right of the church, to try its own members! Under these circumstances, you very properly wind up this diatribe of "paltry sophistry," by admitting "that triad of principles, in the seventh page of our Address, by the magical touch of which," we have dragged your "darkness into day;" (we correct a transposition into which your petulance has betrayed you.) The Conference never did possess such power; such power it could not therefore delegate; and, by consequence, there can be no question of doubtful application, and your artful construction of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, must give place to a construction more conformable to the Constitution, that is, to the Concessions and Code of Laws of that year.

VIII. Our attention is now more particularly due to this attempt, on your part, to blend and confound the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, relating to district meetings, with the Constitution, that is, "the Concessions and Code of Laws" of that year.

Commenting on these Miscellaneous Regulations, and after quoting the fourth of them, you remark, "now this you call 'the Constitution of 1797,' which, you say in your Resolutions, it is the object of your Address to maintain. But you blow hot and cold in this matter; for instead of 'maintaining' this constitution, you reject every thing in it which does not please you; and you set up a principle in direct opposition, not to its spirit only, but to its very letter." "If you really wish constitutional Methodism, here it is in the Minutes of 1795 and 1797; but you spurn it, and yet say you wish to maintain Methodism! It would have been much more honest to have said, 'we want a new constitution for Methodism,' which is the fact."—Watson, p. 17, 18.

Omitting a great deal of mere abuse, we have quoted the above passages, because, when we suspect a man, we always think it an advantage to hear him talk. And now, Sir, allow us to inquire, 1. Is this 4th of the Miscellaneous Regulations a *constitutional* regulation? Is it a regulation at all; or is it a mere recommendation by the Conference to the superintendant? 2. When and where did we ever call these Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, "the *Constitution* of 1797"? how came you to venture on this assertion? 3. In what part, either of our Address or Resolutions, have we spurned either the Constitution, or the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797?

You were perfectly aware, when you wrote this deceptive paragraph, that we spurned nothing but your novel and interested construction of these Regulations! Whether the principle we have laid down be opposed to the Constitution of 1797, or only to your construction, is the question at issue, the decision of which must not be left to your modesty and virtue! 4. On your last assertion, that "we want a new constitution for Methodism," after the solemn declarations of the circuit to the contrary, we can bestow nothing but contempt. 5. And does Richard Watson talk to us about "blowing hot and cold!"—A man who has written on all sides of this very question of Conference power!

We must now beg leave to tell you, Sir, that nothing can be admitted as belonging to the Constitution of 1797, which did not pass in treaty between the delegates of that year and the Conference. Did these Miscellaneous Regulations so pass? Were they ever introduced or read in the Committee of Delegates, until after they had been actually passed into law by the Conference? The third of these Regulations, and the third *only*, appears then, indeed, to have been communicated to the delegates in answer to a question on the case at Bristol. In that case, the societies had been divided, and each party was headed by preachers. This, then, was a case with which the local authorities could not deal, because they had no jurisdiction over these preachers. The preachers, who thus headed the several parties at Bristol, were amongst the oldest and most influential preachers in the Connexion; and the Plan of Pacification had not contemplated such a division amongst the *preachers*, as, in fact, in that particular case, frustrated its execution. We forbear to mention names, but between such parties, it was justly apprehended that the district meeting itself might have great difficulty in deciding. This accounts for the rule, for strengthening the district meeting, by calling in three of the nearest superintendants. But, from the fact, that the delegates recorded on their minutes the communication of this third regulation only, and make no mention of the others, it should seem, that the others were not communicated to them at all. This we believe to have been the fact, and it is more than probable, from the nature of most of these regulations. The fifth, for instance, relates to the election of the chairmen of districts, by ballot of the Conference. Was this a matter of treaty between the Conference and the delegates? These Miscellaneous Regulations, moreover, relate not merely to district meetings, but to "the book concerns," and other matters, with which the delegates had nothing to do. Did the Conference, then, *ex gratia* and unasked, submit these concerns, over which they have ever manifested a peculiar jealousy, to the consideration of the delegates? You are not ignorant, Sir, that the delegates of 1797 had no hand in either framing or agreeing to those Regulations; and which, until perverted by you, were never

held or supposed to have any relation to the people, except as regarded disturbances, occasioned in a circuit by a preacher. The more these Regulations are examined, in connection with the situation of the Conference, and the circumstances of the Connexion at that period, the more convincingly will it appear, that their true object was to give to district meetings, on behalf of the Conference, greater power over individual preachers in the intervals between the Conferences. Several preachers had thrown their circuits into utter confusion, on the Sacrament question; and others had made such displays of their imaginary power and spiritual authority, that the Connexion had been twice roused, and the Conference twice compelled to enter into treaty with general meetings of lay delegates. It was necessary to put a stop to these convulsions; not by overbearing and beating down the local meetings, as at Leeds, but by empowering the President, in conjunction with the district, to deal summarily with these turbulent preachers, and "to redress the grievances" of the people, before it should be necessary to call into operation the Plan of Pacification. But all this was the act of the Conference, for its own preservation, and not the Constitution of 1797. We are acquainted with some of those, who were engaged in the treaty of 1797, and who regard this attempt to foist in these Miscellaneous Regulations, as a part of the Constitution of that year, as one of the most disreputable efforts of your book!

The Constitution of 1797, as we have already explained, consists of the stipulations or concessions, contained in the printed Circular, addressed by the Conference to the Societies, dated Leeds, August 7th, 1797; and of the collection or code of laws therein referred to, and which was "*voluntarily and in good faith*," signed by 145 preachers present at the Conference, "*as approving of and engaging to comply therewith.*" — The printed Circular concludes with the following paragraph:—"We have represented these measures, "which we have taken for your satisfaction, in as concise a manner as we well could, giving you the sense of *the whole*, "not only for brevity's sake, but for expedition; that you may "be informed of the general heads of our proceedings as soon "as possible. In the Regulations,\* which will be published

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\* Our attention has just been directed to a passage in Mr. Beecham's Essay on the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism; in which, quoting this passage, he tells us, page 58, that the Regulations here referred to, 'as containing 'the whole at large,' are the Miscellaneous Regulations; and that these regulations 'are the things to which the Conference refers, as completing the arrangements which it had made.' A moment's reflection refutes this error. 1. The Conference say, "in the Regulations which will be published, *with the Rules of the Society, as above mentioned*, you will have the whole at large." Now, *above*, they had not *mentioned* these Miscellaneous Regulations at all; but they had stated their determination, "that all the Rules which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings, [being the Rules so 'carefully revised' and sub-



"with the Rules of the Society, as mentioned above, you will have the whole at large." Accordingly, this CODE OF LAWS, containing "the whole—the whole at large," all that we call "the Constitution of 1797," was so published, with the Rules of the Society, shortly after the Conference. But, as you know perfectly well, Sir, from beginning to end, either of the Concessions, or the Code of Laws, there is not an allusion to, nor even a hint of, the Miscellaneous Regulations. This charter of Methodistical liberty contains not a word nor a syllable about the power of district meetings to interfere in any cases, ordinary or extraordinary, in the affairs of a circuit, or in the trial of local officers and members. On the contrary, the assumed authority of special district meetings, which had constituted one of the chief grounds of complaint, was most anxiously disclaimed by the Conference in those Concessions. "Such have been the sacrifices we have made," say they, "that our district committees have hardly any authority remaining." Nay, so very objectionable was this power in that day, that the Conference thought it necessary to remind the societies that, even in the trial of preachers, they might, "according to the Plan of Pacification, in every instance in which the trustees, leaders, and stewards chose to interfere, supersede, in a great measure, the regular district committees;" and which implies, that if the trustees, leaders, and stewards did not think it necessary to interfere, then the district committee would themselves deal with the accused preacher, according to the powers entrusted to them in these Miscellaneous and other former Regulations. In the absence of such interference, the trial of preachers was the proper duty and business of these district committees; but as to the trial of local officers and members, their assumed power in this respect was clearly, and without any exception or reserve, given up and determined by the Concessions and Code of Laws. Here,

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scribed by them,] should be published, with the Rules of the Society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members." 2. They were to be published, with the Rules of Society. The Miscellaneous Regulations never were so published; they appeared only in the Minutes of the Conference, and were never connected with the Rules of the Society. 3. But the revised "Collection of Rules or Code of Laws," so far as regarded the people, were actually published with the Rules of the Society, shortly after the Conference of 1797, and they still appear thus connected, in our class-books. 4. These Miscellaneous Regulations do not contain the "whole at large;" they contain scarcely any thing relating to the societies, leaders, stewards, &c. &c., or of the several matters mentioned in the printed circular; but the "Code of Laws," thus published, embodies all the particulars of this circular, with the additional matters; and thus contains "the whole at large." We do not accuse Mr. Beecham of intentional error, in thus altogether throwing on one side the Code of Laws, and substituting the Miscellaneous Regulations; but it is one of those blunders which effectually destroy the authority of his book, by proving that he does not understand his subject, and is too careless to be correct. The exposure of this blunder, overturns also the main principle of the party, that the Miscellaneous Regulations were contemplated in the Concessions, as the provision for extraordinary cases, with reference to the people.



then, in the code of laws, thus published with the Rules of the Society, we have, according to the Conference of 1797, and, as far as the people are concerned, "the whole—the whole at large!"—"That is all a mistake," quoth the Rev. R. Watson, in 1829! "The most important thing of all, the provision in extraordinary cases, has been quite overlooked! Here is the Constitution of 1797; not in the Concessions or Code of Laws, but in certain Miscellaneous Regulations relating to district meetings. If you really wish constitutional Methodism, here it is, in the Miscellaneous Regulations!" We are told that your book is to pass into law at the next Conference; but remember, Sir, Mr. Vevers's principle will not be forgotten, "the Conference itself has not the power to make or promulgate any new law, which shall change or affect the Constitution of Methodism."

IX. We notice, in the next place, another infusion of the genuine spirit of your party. It is the affectation which pervades your whole book, of not being able to understand whether, in objecting to this usurped and oppressive jurisdiction of special district meetings, we intend also to oppose their proper and constitutional authority, under the Plan of Pacification and the Regulations of 1797. If there be one point plainer than another in the London South Address, it is this very point, propounded in the first sentence of Part I. of that Address, viz. "That travelling preachers alone are, by the present constitution of Methodism, amenable to special district meetings," &c. In commenting on the rules on this subject, we not only incessantly point out this proper and lawful jurisdiction, but we emphatically quote the rules in *italics*, to draw attention to it. (See London South Address, pp. 10, 11.) Nay, it is the gist of our argument, that the object of these rules was to establish this jurisdiction, and not the one for which you contend. We have not space for quotation, but let the reader turn to the concluding paragraph of Part I. and to the summary of our arguments on the rule of 1797, given pp. 20, 21, of our Address to the Conference.

Mistake, then, on this part of the subject was impossible; and the affectation of it would have been utterly childish and ridiculous, had it not been for the lurking design which it was intended to cover. No man, reading the London South Address, ever did imagine or suspect that we wished to do away with the proper and lawful jurisdiction of special district meetings; and yet, affecting darkness in the face of the sun, you go on to interrogate us, "when you dwell upon the case of a special district meeting interfering to take cognizance of proceedings on the part of leaders, stewards, and local preachers at Leeds, and from that take occasion to exclaim against all such interference with the local affairs of a circuit, did you, my brethren, intend to exclaim against all such inter-

ferences of every kind in the affairs of circuits?" You then explain your motive for asking this question: "Because in the Rules of Pacification and the Regulations of 1797, you must have seen—that the Plan of Pacification gives to a majority of trustees, or to the majority of the stewards and leaders of any society, the power of calling such [no, Sir, not *such*] a special meeting of the district, in order to try any preacher appointed for the circuit, on charges of immorality, [false doctrine,] deficient abilities, or violation of rule; of which meeting the trustees, stewards, and leaders are to be members; so that if the charges are considered to be proved by the majority of that meeting, he may be removed from the circuit"—"did you then intend to renounce that privilege in your zeal against special district meetings? If you did, [you knew we did not!] this is in proof that you must have aimed, not at the preservation of Methodism, as settled in 1795 and 1797, but at some quite *new* system,—which would have involved greater projects of change than perhaps you were aware of, but which were not unthought of by those who penned your Address and Resolutions."—Watson, p. 15.

To this last sentence, knowing, as you could not but know, that the whole bent and aim of our Address was to point out this proper design and provision of special district meetings, in opposition to "*the novel and unauthorized extension of their jurisdiction,*" attempted at Leeds, it were beneath us to offer any reply. Here is, first, an affectation of mistake, where none could be made; next, a wilful perversion of acknowledged truth into hypothetical falsehood; and all this labour of darkness is to make way for a piece of foul and wilful slander! We refer you here, Sir, to a higher tribunal than that of the Conference—a tribunal which has said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour!"

The artifice of the above interrogation, several times repeated, is sufficiently apparent. Coming forward in defence of an odious and tyrannical assumption of power on the part of special district meetings, and aware that it will not do to plead for them on any of the facts of the Leeds case, you attempt to borrow a little credit for such meetings, on cases in which it is allowed that they are both useful and necessary. You spread out and detail the advantages of special district meetings, in cases which are not questioned, and then, as though all were gained, you surprise the reader with the inquiry,—"Did you then intend to renounce that privilege in your zeal against special district meetings? You never could intend to give up this protection to yourselves, without some substitute for it?" Alas! Sir, the great objection to all this is, its repugnance to that simplicity and sincerity which we expect in a minister of Jesus Christ! You knew very well that we intended nothing of the kind; but that, on the contrary, these provisions of the Plan of Pacification were an

essential part of that constitution of Methodism which we were anxious to maintain! You knew this; and therefore you were prepared for the reply; and, with a dexterity becoming the disreputable game you play, in the very next sentence you seek to turn the tables.

"If, however, you did not intend to renounce this privilege, you did not intend to denounce all special district meetings, and all interferences with the local affairs of a circuit!" Admirable discovery, Sir! but what next? "You would keep the privilege of using special district meetings to try the cases of preachers, and to remove them; and you disclaim them only when they are called to repress faction and disorder among the people. Brethren, is this fair dealing?—You claim liberty for yourselves, but I pray you on whom do you put the yoke?" Oh! Richard Watson! Richard Watson! in the yoke at last! It is hard work! to be sure; but why did you not explain to the reader this provision of the Plan of Pacification, and contrast it with the constitution, claims, and conduct of the Leeds Special District Meeting, that he might judge of our fair dealing, and of the grievous yoke of which you complain? Why did you not inform him, that when the complaints against a preacher had become so loud and general, as to induce the trustees, leaders, and stewards to rise up against him; and when the case was so clear and conclusive, that the majority of a meeting, in which his brethren, the preachers of the whole district, would form, in all probability, the more numerous party, were compelled to decide against him;—yet, after all, the power of this mixed district meeting extended no further than to effect a mere "change of preachers," by removing the obnoxious preacher from the circuit. If the case be a flagrant one;—if the question be, whether the offender shall continue a Methodist preacher, all the laymen must instantly withdraw; and the travelling preachers of the district alone, "shall determine *among themselves* how the removed preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference; and shall have authority to suspend the said preacher from all public duties till the Conference, *if they judge proper!*" To make the cases parallel, therefore, the Special District Meeting at Leeds should only have had power to remove a leader from one class to another; but the question being one of expulsion from office, the travelling preachers ought to have withdrawn altogether, and to have left that question to be determined by the brethren of the accused, the leaders, *among themselves*. This would have been fair dealing, if you please, Sir; but there is little of that to be found in your book! You have been too long accustomed to the task of adjusting the yoke, to mistake the neck on which to place it!

Let it not be supposed that we exclaim against the fair principle laid down in the Plan of Pacification. We lay no yoke

upon any man. We think that the highly constitutional principle, that every man shall be tried by his peers, by men of the same rank and station with himself, and which is one of the great bulwarks of British liberty and law, is also just and equitable in Methodism. We allow it in full to you, Sir, and we claim it but partially for ourselves! Is this fair dealing? Is this putting a yoke upon you? What must the reader think when he finds, that after a preacher has rendered himself so very obnoxious in a circuit, that neither his brethren of the circuit, nor all the preachers of the district, with all their influence as ministers, and with each a vote, can save him from condemnation; yet, after all, this convicted preacher can still demand to be tried by his peers, by travelling preachers alone; and that they have power not only to continue him in his office, but to reward him (possibly for some attack on the liberties of the people) by appointing him to a better circuit than the one from which he is removed? What, we repeat, must the reader think of your question of fair dealing, when he learns, that in no case can a private member or local officer demand this right of being tried by his peers; for that in the leaders' meeting, before which the trial takes place, the superintendant preacher is, *ex-officio*, chairman; and that all the travelling preachers of the circuit are entitled to attend and vote? Can any man suppress a feeling of indignation on discovering that, not satisfied with this immense advantage over the laity, all your whining about fair dealing, and whincing at a pretended yoke, is because we deny your right to pour in a multitude of preachers from the surrounding district, to coerce the decisions of the leaders' meeting, and to force your arbitrary measures down the throats of the people. This, Sir, was the case at Leeds!

But we thank you for recalling our attention to the Plan of Pacification. The men of 1795 and 1797, twice roused from their homes, and compelled to assemble from all parts of the kingdom, in defence of their liberties, did not leave themselves exposed to this interference of special district meetings. After all these provisions respecting travelling preachers, the eighth and last Article under the second head of the Plan of Pacification, expressly secures to every local preacher, trustee, steward, and leader, this right of trial by his peers, subject only to the interference of the travelling preachers of the circuit, and not to those of the district. "If any local preacher, trustee, steward, or leader, shall disturb the peace of the society, &c. the superintendant of the circuit, or the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the society, so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the travelling preachers of the circuit, and the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that society. Evidence shall be examined on both sides; and, if the charge be proved, the superintendant

preacher shall expel from the Society the person so offending." Here, Sir, is the stipulation of a general right, which every local officer amongst us may claim; but there is no exception, no reservation; no provision for extraordinary emergencies; no stipulation for the intervention of special district meetings; no power given them to take part with the minority against the majority, to declare the former the sound, and the latter the unsound part of the Society; to submit new and arbitrary tests to these local meetings, and to enact, that "no leader, &c. shall be allowed to vote in any trials, or to take part in the administration of our church government, so long as he refuses" these novel and illegal tests. Do you really think, Sir, that the "GIANTS" of 1795 and 1797, as Mr. VEVERS calls them, would have submitted to these things? The mighty had been fallen indeed, if these things could have been submitted to even in the present day, without occasioning the most serious division that Methodism has ever known! The same thing will occur again, whenever these despotic claims are set up and acted upon. And this alone is a sufficient proof of the real character, both of the measures and of the party with whom they originated!

X. This subject you resume at p. 19 of your pamphlet, and in a style and manner still more unworthy and deceptive. Repeating our denial of the right of the Conference, or of a district meeting, "to try, suspend, or expel any local officer or member of Society," you again affect doubt and uncertainty; and, with wonderful simplicity, inquire, "What do you mean by this?" This question you answer by another. "Did you ever know your officers or members tried, suspended, or expelled by the Conference, by a district meeting, or even by a superintendant, since 1797, on his own authority?" Now, Sir, if you mean to limit this latter inquiry to the London South Circuit, we reply, that we look better after these things, and are in no humour to submit to any such arbitrary proceedings: but if the question be a general one, (and certainly you wish it to produce in your favour a general effect,) then the emphatic reply which you have yourself given, "You never did!" is utterly false. Such a case we gave you at p. 35 of our Address to the Conference, in which Mr. GRINDROD, "on his own authority," and in defiance of the local meeting, suspended Mr. M. JOHNSON from his office of a local preacher, for three months. This was not the only case we might have cited; but it was one with the particulars of which you were fully acquainted when you wrote this fallacious reply. It is, moreover, a case in defence of which you have not a word to urge, notwithstanding we had strongly pressed it against you! What follows this hazardous reply is something worse than childish! "You cannot, therefore, mean that the Conference has set up a claim to displace your ordinary tribunals in the



ordinary course of things?" What is left us in the ordinary course of things, we shall see by and bye, when we come to examine the principles you have laid down; but what sort of deception is this which lurks under the pronoun "*your*?" "*Your* ordinary tribunals?" The case out of which this question arose, occurred at Leeds, a place which you name with trembling! Surely, Sir, you have not so far calculated on the simplicity, or rather the stupidity, of your readers, as to imagine that they cannot distinguish between London and Leeds; or that they will be satisfied with your proof, that no injustice has been done at Leeds, because our ordinary tribunals in London have not been displaced! The ordinary tribunals at Leeds were displaced and broken up by the Special District Meeting, in the manner stated at p. 26 of our Address to the Conference; another heavy and grievous abuse of power by that meeting, respecting which you deem it prudent to be altogether silent! The Conference, acting under the influence of your party, has unhappily sanctioned this conduct, and thanked the perpetrators of it for their services! In so doing, the Conference has certainly set up a claim to displace *our* ordinary tribunals, and those of every other circuit! Under the same baneful and destructive influence, they resolved that these proceedings were *constitutional* in Methodism, under the regulations of 1797! A resolution which has more deeply compromised the public character of the Conference, than any other ever passed by that assembly! Whether all this is to be the *ordinary* course of things or not, we cannot tell; not knowing how far the influence and ambition of your party may carry you; but certainly, at present, it does appear to us most *extraordinary*!

As is usual, however, with men once embarked in a desperate cause, you grow bolder as you proceed. "Nay, even in the extraordinary circumstances of the Leeds case, no man was tried by the district meeting, but by the meeting, to which, as local preacher or leader, he belonged." You know better, Sir! You know that those regular and lawful meetings had been broken up; and that new meetings had been formed of such members *only*, as chose to take the test; and that this was the scheme and law of the Special District Meeting, enjoined and insisted upon in their printed resolutions! You know that this was done in order that the Special District Meeting might have no difficulty in effecting their will and pleasure, in relation to every trial which took place! You know that nothing which could be fairly and honestly called a trial did, in fact, take place at Leeds. It was all mere mockery! The Special District Meeting assembled to put out whom they pleased, and to retain whom they pleased. This was the result practically, as to the individuals expelled; and it was the thing premeditated and designed. All who resisted the will of

certain preachers, were to be sacrificed; and refusing to submit, they were so sacrificed! And then comes forward the Rev. Richard Watson, in great *affection* and simplicity, to tell the world, "No man was tried by the Special District Meeting, but by the meeting to which he belonged!" We ask you, Sir, in return, and with much more reason, "What do you mean by this?" The Special District Meeting either claimed the right to try, or they did not. If they claimed the right, why did they adopt the (in that case) hypocritical farce of a packed and tested leaders' meeting? If they made no pretension to this right, why did they assemble at Leeds? why regulate the proceedings of the local jurisdictions by their own dictatorial resolutions? and why pour in their own members into the leaders' meeting, pending these trials, to overawe and control the decisions, to say nothing of the direct interference complained of? Your very great anxiety to persuade us that the district meeting did not try, should seem a sufficient admission that they had no right to try. Will you hold to this? It is the admission of our whole case! We deny the right of a special district meeting to try local officers or members of Society. Are we then agreed? If not, if you still claim the right, why then all this laboured attempt to show that the district meeting did not try and expel the brethren at Leeds? If they had the right, why be so anxious to prove that they did not exercise it? Would any man, of common sense, argue backwards and forwards, in this extraordinary manner, if he had any other object than to blind people's eyes, and befool their understandings? That your book has no other object is evident, for in the very next sentence, coiling like an eel, you begin again to ply us with our denial of the right! And it is not until you have thrust this denial in quadruple form upon our simplicity, that we are favoured with a distinction between *ordinary* and *extraordinary* cases; a distinction nowhere recognized, either in the Plan of Pacification, or in the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797!

"Seeing then all *ordinary* cases are out of the question, you must mean to deny, that in no (any) *extraordinary* case of any kind, the Conference or a district meeting has any right or power 'to try, suspend, or exclude any local officer or member.' Let us, then, take such a case,—a case of immorality, a case of false doctrine, a case of notorious insubordination to the rules of the body." (Watson, p. 19.) Very well, Sir; and now that you have such a case, what follows? Oh! why, "it is clear," say you, "that if the local tribunals did their duty, the offender would be admonished or expelled in the ordinary way, and no interference of Conference or of a district be required. This interference would not, therefore, take place." This is very kind, indeed, Sir! and we are

happy to hear, that so long as we do our duty, we are not to be visited with this scourge! But do you not think, that it is somewhat impertinent in you, Sir, to suppose, that the local tribunals would not do their duty in such a case? Do you think it very likely, that respectable and religious men,—men attached to Methodism all their lives, as most of our local officers have been, would wish to associate and take part with heretical, immoral, or lawless individuals? This would certainly be a very extraordinary case; but did you ever know such a case? You deal largely in imaginary cases; but your argument stands very much in need of that kind of support, which can be derived only from facts. You, nevertheless, most carefully avoid all appeal to facts! Can it be imagined, that if you had been in possession of a single instance, the circumstances and bearing of which, when examined, would have told in your favour, you would have withheld it? But we shall presently resume this subject. In the mean time, is it not a little too barefaced, to propose to rob us of the liberties, so strenuously maintained by our fathers in 1795 and 1797, upon the bare supposition, that it is possible that a whole leaders' meeting, or the majority thereof, may, at some future period, renounce Mr. Wesley's doctrines, which they have embraced from heartfelt experience, and so long professed, and yet wish to go on hypocritically professing themselves Wesleyans? To the local preachers this argument can hardly apply; because, as you tell us, "the chapels are secured to those who love the doctrines, which only can be preached in them." Are we to suppose, then, that these men would wish to go on preaching and teaching Mr. Wesley's doctrines, which they no longer believed? If you can suppose any individual so insane as to act thus, can you believe it of the majority of the leaders and local preachers of a circuit? Again, is it not rather too much, to put the whole Connexion under the surveillance of this new fangled and tyrannical police, on the mere presumption, that it is possible that the majority of the leaders and local preachers of a circuit will, all at once, and by compact and agreement, cast off all the restraints of character and decency, and become Sabbath-breakers, swearers, drunkards, liars, thieves, and immoral persons, or that they should wish to associate with and protect individuals of this description after proof and conviction? Lastly, after embracing Methodism ourselves, and training up our children within her pale, on the express terms of the treaties of 1795 and 1797; after investing, as many of us have done, our property in her chapels and institutions; after becoming, as many of us now are, responsible for an enormous amount of chapel debts, (the bane of the Connexion, and the true foundation of your presumption;) in short, after devoting all our energies, and many of us a long life, in incessant endeavours to support and

extend a system which (if it can be preserved against your underminings) we still believe to be better qualified than any other to spread the Redeemer's kingdom;—are we now to be told, that all these treaties are to be given up; that it is expedient and necessary that all faith should be violated; and that we and our children should bow down our necks to this absolute government of the Conference, as exercised by special district meetings,—the very thing which the men of 1795 and 1797 refused to acknowledge; and all, forsooth, because it is apprehended, that it is possible that, at some future period, such a thing may happen, as never yet did happen, to wit, that the great majority of a circuit may suddenly abandon all that is dear to them, and, all at once, break out into notorious insubordination to the rules of the body to which they are so strongly attached; and that, simultaneously, and without any assignable cause, they may wish suddenly to overturn that system, to which they have pledged themselves in heart, in hand, in property, in character, and in all that is dear to man? The government which can proceed to legislate on such principles as these ought to renounce its connection, not only with the Christian church, but with the civilized world! We are persuaded, this is not the character of the Methodist Conference. They will, ere long, we cannot but believe, see through your party; and will cast off an incubus, as disgraceful to themselves, as it is detrimental and ruinous to the Connexion!

XI. In the preliminary part of your book, whilst paving your way to these monstrous absurdities, you inform us, that we are not “sufficiently aware of the *necessity* of maintaining such a power of remedial interference!” Indeed, Sir, after carefully considering this question, and with all the aid of your sophistry, (for it is not reason,) we must still say, that so far from discovering any “necessity” for this power, we are the more convinced that it is the most dangerous and destructive power, which, in a Connexion like ours, could be intrusted to your hands! The predilection of Methodism in favour of a system wholly itinerant, has gone far to render you independent of the church. To talk of your responsibility to Conference, that is, to one another; of the right of the people to appeal to the Conference, that is, to those who are responsible only to themselves, is gross deception! Does Methodism furnish her societies with any direct means of calling her Conference or a district meeting to account? Is there, in fact, any check on the Conference, or on a district meeting, save that of public opinion; or any remedy save that of disruption? Had the Leeds brethren, so wrongfully expelled, and so shamefully treated, that a thousand members on the spot, and some of them the most enlightened and intel-

ligent persons in the circuit, chose voluntarily to share their reproach and their wrongs, rather than submit to such treatment,—had these brethren, we ask, any remedy against either the district meeting or the Conference? And has this circuit, at this moment, Sir, any means whatever of protecting itself against similar treatment, save that which it has provided for itself by the resolutions of the 23rd September last? Has the church, has her local presbytery, no interest in the members of her community? Is Methodism the fruit of your labours exclusively or principally? Does God work by you alone in saving men? How many pious and faithful leaders and local preachers had spent their strength in gathering the souls thus cut off at Leeds! How incessantly and how painfully had they watched over them, and preserved them for years! And do you now come forward, and demand of the church to surrender into your hands *exclusively*, a weapon by which you may cut off her members by the thousand at a stroke, and that simply for non-submission to your high authority, in matters where neither faith nor morals are concerned? Do you make this imperious demand in the same breath with which you spurn all responsibility to the church; and preach up the Conference as the supreme and absolute authority? All this may appear very reasonable and “*necessary*” to you and your party; but, surely, Sir, it is not the modest men,—not the men distinguished for meekness and humility, for faith and piety, in the Conference, who claim this irresponsible power over the church! These latter are not heard to talk as you do, of “compelling obedience by the force of their authority,” and of their “power to rule the church for its edification!” It must be a very different, and we hope a very limited, class of men, who, overlooking the labours of local preachers and leaders, and of their more humble and heavenly-minded brethren in the Conference, can so far fancy themselves sole lords of the inheritance, as to prefer these demands in the face of the Connexion! Men whose souls are not fired with the same unworthy ambition to rule the church,—men whose ambition reaches higher, and aims at a recompense of reward for turning many to righteousness, cannot surely stand up for the necessity of thus converting the church into a Gentile lordship! You, of course, do not intend any wrong; you are no advocates for arbitrary dealings; you only want the power “for edification;” but you would be shocked at the bare thought of the possibility of your ever abusing it! And who, indeed, could suspect, that so good and excellent a man as Mr. Evangelist would ever do any harm to his neighbour?

Your argument in support of the *necessity* of this pretended right of interference, like every other argument in your book, was not to be deduced from fact and experience. You



are constrained to admit, in the outset, that "the Connexion, by the blessing of God, has been for several years past in great peace; the discipline of the body being carried generally into effect, by the united efforts of preachers and leaders. False doctrines have seldom sprung up; immorality has not been winked at; and the prevalent desire has been, not to innovate upon our discipline, but to maintain it." Watson, p. 11. This you admit on behalf of the people, and we wish we could say as much on behalf of the Conference and of special district meetings; but, at any rate, there is nothing in all this to shew us the *necessity* of your breaking faith with the Constitution of 1797, by the introduction of your new remedial power! "But," you ask, "will any thinking man assume, as the basis of an argument on a question of government, that this will always be the case? There have been a sufficient number of cases to show how necessary and beneficial such a power of interposition is; [why did you not produce ONE?] and had there been none at all, since 'it must needs be that offences will come,' are you acting considerately to advocate a principle that would shut out the right of such interference?" Watson, p. 12. It is difficult to avoid treating this question as it deserves. Individual cases, of course, are out of the question; they can be dealt with in the ordinary way. The case is that of a whole circuit, or the majority of the leaders, local preachers, trustees, and stewards, becoming suddenly corrupt in doctrine, morals, or discipline; and we are asked, whether any thinking man will found an argument on a question of government, without assuming for its basis so great an absurdity! But we wish to be serious, and therefore we proceed with the quotation: "Some of our Societies, with their leaders and local preachers, have, in times past, been infected with Arianism, Socinianism, and Universalism." Was this the case at Leeds, Sir? "Others have been disposed to wink at certain forms of Sabbath-breaking, at smuggling, and other immoralities." Do you speak of Leeds, Sir? "Others have been inducted into views of church government, opposed to the first principles of that under which we—live," &c. Still nothing about the necessity at Leeds! So then there was no *necessity* for this kind of interference at Leeds; and all that was done there was unnecessary! Is it not rather cruel thus to leave the Leeds Special District Meeting in the lurch? Why do you stop short with your imaginary cases? Why not include one, at least, so recently supported by fact? Why did you not add, "Others have rebelled against the superintendant and the Conference, for overturning the lawful decisions of the leaders' meeting; relative to organs; and for suspending their local officers in defiance of the local jurisdictions; and have proved so factious as to allege, against these acts of the Conference and the superintendant, the principle of

the Plan of Pacification, and the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797!" This would have been a famous case whereon to found your alleged necessity of remedial interference. It is the greater pity that you should have overlooked it, because, as we apprehend, it is the only case on which you can hope to succeed with your argument!

Abandoning the Leeds case, however, you tell us, that all the other cases which you state have happened; we presume, therefore, that they are parallel cases, and were all settled by the interference of a special district meeting, as at Leeds. If not, how then does the necessity for such interference appear? But when and where did all these special district meetings assemble? It is singular that we should never have heard of them. It is passing strange that whole circuits should have cast off their allegiance to Methodism, and that the Connexion should have remained in total ignorance of facts so alarming! Perhaps you will have the goodness to favour us with a sight of the printed resolutions of these former district meetings, or inform us where they may be procured; that we may compare them with those of the Leeds Special District Meeting! Perhaps, also, you would not think us troublesome if we request you to point us to the resolutions and thanks of the Conference, respecting these former district meetings; and, especially, as the omission of all these particulars in your book is rather a serious oversight?

Alas, Sir! in all this laboured effort to find a ground for your pretended necessity, you have drawn too largely on our simplicity! That the cases you suppose have occasionally happened, in relation to individuals, we may safely admit; but, that a whole circuit, or the majority of any circuit, ever did renounce or cast off Methodist doctrine or discipline, or become Sabbath-breakers, smugglers, or immoral persons, we deny. The very suggestion is preposterous! Until however this is not only proved to have been actually the case, but, also, that its recurrence is probable, and justly apprehended, your argument is not worthy a moment's consideration! and yet, in order to prepare us for submission to this odious assumption of power, you require us to suppose all this to be the case in our own circuit! "Suppose, that in your own respectable society, the majority of local preachers and leaders were to imbibe and teach false doctrines;—and, if the primitive churches fell by this means, what security have you against this trial of your faith?—how then would the doctrine of the inviolability of your local jurisdictions affect you?" Watson, pp. 11, 12. You have yourself answered this question so far as the alarm which you would excite extends, viz. with regard to the chapels. We perceive, in several places of your book, that dark and unfounded insinuations are thrown out in relation to the chapels, which cannot be mistaken. Blow the trumpet,

Sir! sound an alarm; the danger is great! It is not only the church and the faith, but the chapel, also, is in danger!!! Would any man descend to these subterfuges, if he did not feel convinced, in his conscience, that he had no foundation in truth and righteousness whereon to rest his argument? But you have told us, the "chapels are *secured* to the use of those, who love the doctrines which only can be preached in them." The poor souls, then, whom you would thus alarm by your chapel cry, may rest themselves quiet,—“the chapels are secured!” But pray, Sir, who built these chapels? who settled them on the Conference? who secured them to those who love the doctrines? and who are they who are continually subscribing, and building, and settling chapels, in our circuit? Is it not rather early to accuse them of aiming at the chapels, “as well knowing the bearing” of this point? Had you not better wait until they have ceased building and settling chapels, before you raise the cry that they want to pull them down?

To make the supposition you request us to make, would only become the sad tenants of St. Lukes! and we introduced the quotation chiefly on account of the question it contains:—“If the primitive churches fell by this means [imbibing false doctrines], what security have you against this trial of your faith?” We know not, Sir, how far you may be acquainted with the history of the primitive churches; but if you know any thing of that history, then you know, that by this inquiry you impose on the uninformed reader! The primitive churches fell by the corruption of their bishops, both in faith and practice; and not by any heresies originating with the laity. Trace all the great corruptions which have marred the church of Christ, and we will defy you to prove that any one of them ever obtained in the church, or became productive of general mischief, until embraced and defended by the regular clergy. We are bold to meet you here on the broad scale of history; and we affirm, that no church ever did, and no church ever will, fall away; under a sound, zealous, and faithful ministry! This is a position in which not only every intelligent Methodist, but every enlightened Christian, will fully concur with us. Before, therefore, we can suppose that the majority of our leaders and local preachers will become corrupt, we must make a previously necessary supposition, which you have not requested us to make! We must suppose, that the majority of the Methodist Conference have become corrupt and fallen! Until this latter supposition be realized, it is impossible that any rational man can entertain the former; and, especially, seeing that all our pulpits are secured to your use. With what face, then, do you call upon us to suppose this general corruption of our local officers and members; and what shall you be doing, whilst this “leaven of heresy and sin” is working

its way to such awful ascendancy? To what purpose have we called you from your trades, and endowed you with incomes, which place you in happy comparison with the clergy of all other churches, not excepting even those of the Establishment,—to what purpose, we ask, have God and Methodism freed you from secular cares, and set you as watchmen over the fold, if you thus propose to slumber until “immorality, false doctrine, and faction ride triumphant?” Why not stay the evil in its commencement? Why not, on the first discovery, apply the remedy, by bringing the delinquent before the proper local tribunal, whilst the members of those tribunals remain sound and pure? There must surely be ample opportunity for so doing. The plague itself does not carry off a nation in a day! whole churches do not fall from God and from righteousness, as the Son of the Morning fell from heaven! Large and combined societies of Christian men, united by the strongest ties;—men, whose union has been confirmed by habit, consolidated by the growth of years, and cemented by that charity which is the bond of perfectness, do not renounce their principles and their creed, cast off the restraints of religion and morality, and riot in licentiousness by an instantaneous impulse, resembling the sudden disruption of an earthquake! Effects like these are not the lamentable fruit of a day, a week, a month; whole years are generally consumed in these deplorable declines. It was not without reason, therefore, that the great Head of the Church first cast his eyes of flame on the angels (the bishops or pastors) of the Asiatic churches; and addressed to them his dread reproofs on the decay of those prostrate churches. We have no fears for Methodism, but through her Conference,—none, at present, for the Conference, but through your party! In saying this, we do but echo the voice and the sentiment of the venerable Wesley!

But “it must needs be that offences will come!” This is almost the only passage of Scripture which your book contains; for the Scriptures are not with you in this attack on the liberties of the church! The Scriptures are true,—“It must needs be that offences will come;” and, in the present instance, it is highly important to observe the door at which they enter. Special district meetings, you tell us, are not required in *ordinary* cases; it is only under *extraordinary* circumstances that they obtrude. You wish to prove a necessity for their interference in the latter cases; for this purpose you beat about for a case,—a case in point,—an extraordinary case; “Let us,” say you, “take such a case.” But whither, Sir, would you go in quest of such a case? The Leeds case was before you; a case in which a Special District Meeting had actually been held; a case in point, therefore;—an *extraordinary* case;—a case, moreover, so recent, so generally known, and the facts and circumstances of which have been so fully

detailed! How is it that this case will not serve your purpose? How is it that you feel yourself compelled, at every point, to fly off from all fact and experience, and to draw upon your imagination, continually, for fanciful cases, such as never did and never will occur? Can any one mistake you here? Is it not conclusive that the Leeds case does not admit of defence; and that, conscious of this, you studiously keep it out of sight? The Leeds brethren, as is proved by their proposals to Mr. Grindrod, of the 13th October, 1827, (see p. 23,) had no quarrel with either the doctrine, the ordinary discipline, or the morality of Methodism. No! but they complained of the violation of established and fundamental laws, and of the overthrow of the decisions of their local meetings, by Methodist preachers, and by the Methodist Conference! Now, Sir, this is a case of sober fact. It is the only case with which your fertile imagination cannot sport; and, after the explicit notice we have taken of your suppositious cases, we must beg leave to tell you, that it is the only case in which you can ever hope to establish a necessity for those outrages on the local jurisdictions of the Circuits and Societies, which you would pass off under the smooth title of "remedial interferences." Such interferences, by special district meetings, are necessary, highly necessary, to support and extend what is called Conference power,—not indeed the proper and lawful power vested in the Conference by the Constitution of Methodism, and which is not questioned; but the usurped and oppressive power of which the Leeds case furnishes so instructive a display,—the power to declare an "emergency," whenever you please; and then, "to act and decide," without law, and without responsibility, (except to one another,) as to you may seem right and necessary! Yes, Sir, such interferences are necessary, highly necessary, to consolidate and preserve that absolute domination, which you and your party have ever been so anxious to establish; and which you would then so proudly exercise in the name of the Methodist Conference! This is the necessity, and the only necessity, for any interferences, by special district meetings, in local affairs of the people, except where travelling preachers are accused. The necessity, in this case, we fully and freely admit; but then, Sir, you will pardon us if, in our great ignorance and simplicity, we cannot see any just reason, why you, and some dozen or score of your brethren, should be allowed thus to vie with the lords of the Gentiles, in exercising this absolute dominion in the church; nor why our Societies should become the mere vassals of the despotic party in the Methodist Conference. The character of the power you claim is sufficiently displayed in its effects. It is not healing; it is not conciliatory; it is not Christian. Good men form their opinion of it from the Leeds case! There, Methodism has lost a thousand souls, whom Jesus



Christ is unwilling to lose; and with whom, therefore, his Spirit remains! With these brethren we have no controversy in relation to doctrine, or morals, or ordinary discipline! It is simply a question about this absolute power! A power to which Christian men cannot, will not, ought not, to submit. It is the power, not of love, not of the gospel, but, in its essential principle, of the sword; that is, not of reason and principle, but of lawless will and party violence. If we are thus in your power; if we are really thus enslaved in Methodism; if you feel yourselves secure and firmly seated in this car of victory, triumphing over the church, then go on and prosper! Estimate the character of a Methodist no longer by his relation to Christ, but by his subjection to you! "It must needs be that offences will come!" here is your authority and commission! never mind the woe which follows this declaration! your power is *necessary*; "*it must needs be!*" Men who climb to elevations, at which their heads grow dizzy, seldom pause to calculate on consequences!

XII. Having thus answered, we trust, to your entire satisfaction, your fallacious reasonings on the pretended necessity of thus allowing special district meetings to interfere in the local affairs of circuits, except where the conduct or appointment of travelling preachers are concerned, we come now to consider how far we are affected, in the *ordinary* course of things, by this extraordinary power; and by the still more extraordinary reasoning on which you would establish it.

It is amongst the first and by no means the least of the attacks you have made on the foundations and guarantees of our *ordinary* rights, that the "*great sacrifices* in respect to *authority*," made by the Conference of 1797, "on the part of the superintendant and of the whole body of travelling preachers," should be frittered down into mere *checks*! They were checks indeed; and most efficient ones; but they were also actual grants of power, "*sacrifices in respect to authority*." The language of these checks is:—"Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands;" "the whole management of your temporal affairs;" "and by far the greatest part of the superintendant's *authority*!" Here, the thing sacrificed and given up is "*authority*"—"the authority of the superintendant, and of the whole body of travelling preachers," and that, according to the Conference of 1797, to a very great extent. But here your conscience steps in to tell us, that "no absurdity can be greater," than to suppose, that the Conference "divided the duties and powers of the ministry with the leaders' meeting!" All these great "*sacrifices in respect to authority*," consisted of nothing more than "certain checks upon the possible abuses of power!" (Watson, p. 9.) We have told you, Sir, that we

shall not contend with you about terms and phrases ; but let any man, who takes to himself the credit of possessing common sense, turn to the printed circular issued by the Conference of 1797, containing "*the Concessions*;" and, confining his attention to the points in hand, let him say, whether that Conference did, or did not, make the leaders' meeting the sole judges of the *evidence* on which, in all disputed cases, the superintendant should admit or expel local officers and members of Society? and whether, by those Concessions, their decision be not *final* in all such cases?

In order to found your argument for thus reducing these Concessions, you have favoured us, at page 6 of your Address, with a list of the duties and powers, or, as you fondly term them, "the inherent rights of ministers and pastors." As we do not intend to quit the subject, by launching into discussions on foreign matters, we must reserve any remarks we may have to make on this "bill of fare." We must remind you, however, that you have not drawn this list out of the Scriptures, as you would persuade your reader; but, as the country people say, "out of your own head;" and that, like every thing else in your book, it rests on no better foundation than your own broad assertion!

As ministers, however, are but men, and therefore liable to "errors and passions," you admit, that these powers may be "*checked*!"—a most wonderful admission, to be sure, to come after, and in explanation of, the very large and liberal "sacrifices of authority" made in 1797! But, lest these checks and these sacrifices should be of any benefit to the people, they must be counter-checked by two principles, which you (not the Conference of 1797) lay down: "1. That they imply no transfer of powers inherent in the ministry, to those who are not in that office. 2. That the checks shall not obstruct the legitimate and scriptural exercise of those powers." (Watson, p. 7.) How plausible! who can object to principles so just and equitable? Who is so insane as to imagine, that what is *inherent* in one, can be *transferred* to another? Or who so wicked as to wish to obstruct the legitimate exercise of the Christian ministry? But, anxious still to keep in view a practical question, and to see distinctly what are the counter-checks you wish to impose, on the authority of the two principles thus laid down; and how much is still left us of the original checks or sacrifices of 1797, we have to turn from page to page of your book, and gather them up as we can; for though you talk plausibly enough about general principles, you are rather cautious of bringing these counter-checks into very prominent view. Emanating from these principles, we find no less than three of these counter-checks: viz. the minister's conscience; an appeal to Conference; and a special district meeting!

1. The minister's conscience.—“It is clear,” say you, “there may be cases of which the ultimate decision must rest with him.” The cases you mention, (and into which we enter not at present,) relate to the admission and expulsion of members, in which the minister and his church are not agreed. “There is in this case,” you tell us, “a clear power of pastoral rule; and this rule is manifestly established upon the duties made obligatory upon the minister by the very nature of his office itself.” It is, therefore, a matter of conscience; and “either he must compel obedience by the force of his authority; or, if a man of conscience, must abandon so rebellious a flock.” Watson, p. 8. We, therefore, set this down as a separate and distinct power, which you claim for Methodist preachers; for, although you mention it in relation to a Dissenting minister, yet conscience must be equally binding in one church as in another. You, indeed, appear to substitute for it, in Methodism, an appeal to the Conference; and lay it down as a great advantage which a body, existing, like ours, in the form of a Connexion, enjoy over Independent churches, that both preachers and people can appeal to the “common authority!” But it is here that we discover the fallacy of your argument, and the hollowness of this plea of conscience! What appeal can there be in a matter of conscience, save to the word of God; the sure word of testimony, and the only “common authority” in such matters? Next to the authority of Christ, is the authority of the church. But your man of conscience cannot submit his conscience to the church, and yet you require him to submit to Conference! Here, however, you stop short; to make out the great advantage of this appeal of conscience to a common authority, you should have proved the infallibility of Conference; and thereby its capacity and right to decide men's consciences. In short, Sir, if you really mean any thing by the argument on page 8 of your book, you must mean, that whenever a superintendant, perceiving the decision of the leaders' meeting to be against him, shall think proper to stand up and exclaim, “My conscience, brethren, my conscience!” then, instantly, the jurisdiction is transferred from the leaders' meeting to the Conference; and there is an end at once, as to that case, of all the Concessions and the Code of Laws of 1797! Nothing more can be required to convert an *ordinary* case into an *extraordinary* one; and, as the minister may perform this farce whenever he pleases; as it is a matter solely within his own breast, we do, indeed, think this a total subversion of our ordinary tribunals, and a practical comment on your word “consult!” The leaders' meeting, if this point be conceded, is nothing more than an honorary council, whose advice the superintendant may take or reject as he pleases. This, then, is the first of your counter-checks, and your first blow at the Concessions of 1797.

2. But if the superintendant should really be a man of conscience; and disposed, therefore, at any rate rather to submit his conscience to the lawful decision of the church, than to any Conference; or if he be a man of ordinary taste and sentiment, and therefore incapable of acting before a leaders' meeting, the first mentioned farce; then you can put him in the way to do the same thing, viz.—to overthrow the ordinary tribunal, a little more decently! A man of this description will necessarily have about him a certain degree of prudence and foresight. Such a man, avoiding the question of conscience, has but to look around him for some simple and pious soul, who, believing all the minister tells him to be gospel, (and such souls are to be found in every assembly of the church) shall be prepared to follow his instructions. These instructions are simply to wait until he finds that the vote of the meeting is contrary to the will of the superintendant; he is then to rise, and utter the potent words, "I appeal to the Conference!" These words, like a talisman, instantly transfer the jurisdiction; and the superintendant, "of his own authority," and in defiance of the local tribunal, immediately proceeds to admit or expel, as to him may seem meet! There is, indeed, the appeal to the Conference, if any body shall think it worth while to be at the trouble and expense of prosecuting it; which is not very likely! "To the people," you observe, "as in 1797, are granted certain checks upon the possible abuses of power; against the possible abuse of which checks themselves, however, an APPEAL always lay to the Conference from *any* person whatever *thinking* himself aggrieved." Watson, p. 9. It would be a hard matter if a superintendant could not find one person to serve his purpose in a leaders' meeting, though all the rest should be of one mind. But of this pretended appeal we shall treat hereafter; at present, we are merely enumerating your counter-checks, in order to see what is left us of our *ordinary* jurisdictions; and therefore we do but name,

3. That in case the annual assembly of the Conference be not near at hand, and the superintendant, finding that the leaders' meeting penetrate all these politic schemes, and are firm in resisting them, is of opinion that he cannot go on comfortably in his circuit, whilst thus at war with the local authorities, he may then "allege an emergency!" Presently, down comes the President of the Conference, with three official advisers, (the heads of your party) and all the preachers of the surrounding district, and as many more as may be thought necessary to give evidence on behalf of the Conference! This assembly immediately vote, that they have "full powers to act and decide, as to them may seem right and necessary!" The only question then is,—“Is the power for which this superintendant has chosen to contend worth preserving? If it be, let us invent a new test; and immediately expel all who do not choose to submit,

though it should be not less than a thousand of the best leaders, local preachers, trustees, stewards, and members of the society

Now, Sir, these are the counter-checks which we gather from your book; and we put it to every fair and candid man, whether, in all this, an attempt is not made to interfere with our *ordinary* tribunals? Whether, in short, if these counter-checks be admitted, the concessions and checks of 1797 be not worse than useless—a mere delusion! But this is not our argument; our great point, to which we adhere, is, that this is not the law of Methodism! None of these counter-checks appear in any record of Methodism; and were never heard or thought of, as we shall presently prove, until your party came into power, when these attacks on our liberties began first to steal out in the Magazine. Here we may safely rest our case. If for any one of these counter-checks you can find any authority in the Plan of Pacification, or in the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, we will yield the present controversy! Nay, so far as we are concerned, we should be willing, in that case, to give up all the concessions and checks, and every thing else that the Conference has granted, or pretended to grant, to the people; for it were better that you should wield an absolute and irresponsible power, under the risks and dangers which invariably accompany the exercise of such a power, than that you should act under the shelter of ostensible checks, which are rendered purely fictitious by this triad of counter-checks. These treble-checked checks are indeed an admirable device to screen and cloak the encroachments of ministerial power, on the liberties of the church; but they certainly afford no security against such encroachments. The appeal to the Conference is the perfection of the scheme. Whenever was a Corporation known to abandon claims and pretensions to power, so long as any individuals amongst them, of character and conscience, could be found to maintain them? It would be a strange thing in the earth, if, in such matters, the politic morality of a Corporation should be found more straightened and fastidious, than the conscience of an individual minister! Such is the happy fruit of allowing Methodist preachers to follow the example of the Roman Catholic and other clergy, in claiming to themselves, *exclusively*, and of “inherent right,” every power, privilege, and right, which Jesus Christ has vested in his whole church! Thus, Father Lainez, general of the Jesuits, spake for two hours, in the Council of Trent, in a high and magisterial tone. “His argument was, that the right of jurisdiction over Christ’s kingdom here, had been given entirely to the Roman Pontiff, and not a single particle of it to any other in the church!”

XIII. Having made this parade of your inherent rights, and modestly admitted these checks, thrice checked, you proceed



to illustrate your views by a reference to Independent churches; and, as the two succeeding paragraphs contain your general scheme of ministerial power, we shall devote some attention to them.

"Every minister, even of an Independent church, has a right to claim these principles, in his agreement to labour with any people. He may be required to *take the opinion* of his church, as to the fitness of persons to be received into their communion; but he is the person admitting: He may be restrained from excluding until delinquency is proved *before* the church; but he is the person excluding: The consent of the people *may be taken* before the admission of any one into the ministry; but he and his brethren in the ministry, are the parties ordaining." Watson, p. 9. Now, Sir, this is rather an ambiguous way of talking. When the minister is required "to *take the opinion* of his church," is he to be bound by the opinion given? When restrained from excluding, until delinquency is proved "*before* the church," is it meant that the church is to be satisfied with the proof, and that their judgment is to decide the case? If so, all is well, we require nothing more. That the minister, in general, admits, expels, and ordains, ministerially and officially, (but not of inherent right,) we needed not to be told; he is the officer of the church to perform these acts. But being bound to take the opinion and judgment of the church, is he to be at liberty, on his own high and spiritual authority, to go and act directly in the teeth of that decision? This was the case at Leeds, Sir, in reference, particularly, to Mr. Johnson's case; and, it is clear from what follows, that it is this latter course you are anxious to recommend to dissenting ministers.

The duty of receiving and expelling members you have inserted in your list of inherent rights; and the right being, as you tell us, *inherent*, cannot, or ought not to be, in any sense, dependant on the will of the church! Thus you add, "If his people so act with him as to—restrain nothing but a mistaken or selfish use of his powers, well; but if he subject himself to such a control, as would make the power of fulfilling his duties [why do you change the terms of the argument? Read, make his right of receiving and expelling members,] dependant absolutely upon others, [i. e. the church,] he would by that act so far divest himself of his office, as to share it with others, [the church,] whilst he himself remains under its full and sole responsibility to God."

In all this you assume and assert much, but you prove nothing. With better reason, the Independent minister, on the contrary, assumes and admits that he has no right whatever to force his church into communion with persons whom they believe and declare to be immoral persons; nor to separate them from communion with those whom they believe to be living and

worthy members of the body of Christ. This is the real question; where are the scripture proofs on which you found such an "inherent right" in a Christian minister? You do but blind the eyes of the reader by all this talk about a pastor sharing his office with others, whilst he remains under its full and sole responsibility to God. The duty of a minister is to enforce by his ministry, (not the force of authority, in your sense,) upon all awakened and serious persons, the duty of Christian communion; and upon the church the duty and obligation of receiving all such persons into their communion. So also with regard to the expulsion of immoral and irregular members: and he is, generally, the officer of the church, to perform *officially* these acts. But it is no part of his duty to fly in the face of his church in particular cases, on which the church has decided. He can be under no responsibility to God in such a case, provided he have done his duty in rightly informing and advising the church on the subject. The church has decided the matter, and it would argue a very high degree of presumption in him to set up his judgment and conscience in opposition to those of the church. The Independent ministers have more sense, and a better acquaintance with their scriptural rights and duties. They know, that however high and solemn the sanctions under which they exercise their ministry, yet, after all, churches are voluntary associations. They know that, as they have no power to "*compel*" men to believe the gospel, and unite in church fellowship, "by the force of their authority," (an expression which could not have fallen from a respectable dissenting minister,) so neither have they authority to "*compel*" or *force* the judgment of the church, as to the worthiness or unworthiness of any individual, whom they as ministers might wish to admit or expel.\*

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\* Notwithstanding our determination not to launch out on general questions of Church Government, our sole object being to maintain the Constitution of 1795 and 1797, we cannot withhold the following passage, as an antidote to your inherent rights. It admits of no exception; no reservation of extraordinary cases; none of which the ultimate decision must rest with the minister; none in which "there is a clear power of pastoral rule, made obligatory on the minister by the very nature of his office itself." After referring to our Lord's precept, relating to the disputes of private Christians, (Matt. xviii. 15.) Dr. Campbell observes, "The practice of the Apostolic age, which has the best title to the denomination of primitive, is the surest commentary on this precept of our Lord. Not only were such private offences then judged by the church, that is, the congregation, but also those scandals which affected the whole Christian fraternity. Accordingly, the judgment which Paul, by the Spirit of God, had formed concerning the incestuous person, he enjoins the church, to whom his epistle is directed, that is (to use his own words for an explanation,) "them, who at Corinth are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," to pronounce and execute. And in his second epistle to the same church, (Chap. ii. 6,) he says, in reference to the same delinquent, "Sufficient to such a man is the censure which was inflicted by many," ὑπὸ τῶν πλείονων, *by the community*, and, (ver 10,) "to

But you can instruct the Independent minister how he is to act in such a case,—he is instantly to become the accuser of his flock, and to charge them with refusing to admit into their communion, persons brought to God under his ministry, without any reason but a factious opposition; with resisting the expulsion of persons notoriously wicked; and proved [before whom you do not say!] to be so on unquestionable evidence, from laxity of moral feeling, or from the same factious spirit.” There are, however, several absurdities in this instruction, which an Independent minister would not be likely to overlook:—

1. He must bring this railing accusation against the whole church, or, “the majority of its members,” which would be to *unchurch* his church!

2. As we have reminded you, that no church ever did, or ever will pass into such a state, or continue in it, under a sound, zealous, and faithful ministry; he ought in fairness to preface the charge, by admitting himself to be a corrupt and fallen minister!

3. The church having associated themselves voluntarily, that is, without any compulsion from man, but under a high sense of religious obligation; and that for the very purpose of themselves enjoying, and, by the enlargement of their community, of spreading the blessings of the gospel, he must suppose them, or the majority of them, so insane, as to defeat these great ends of their union, and violate their consciences,

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whom ye forgive any thing,” addressing himself always to the congregation, “I forgive also.” We admit, with the learned Dodwell,\* that in the censure inflicted on the incestuous person, the Christians at Corinth were but the executors of the doom, awarded by the Apostle. Nor does any one question the Apostolical authority in such matters, over both the flock and the pastors. But from the words last quoted, it is evident that he acknowledges, at the same time, the ordinary power in regard to discipline, lodged in the congregation. And from the confidence he had in the discretion and integrity of the Corinthians, he promises his concurrence in what they shall judge proper to do. “To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also.” Now, though in after times, the charge of this matter also came to be devolved; first, on the bishop and presbyters, and, afterwards, solely on the bishop; yet that the people, as well as the presbyters, as far down, at least, as to the middle of the third century, retained some share in the decision of questions wherein morals were immediately concerned, is manifest, from Cyprian’s letters still extant. In his time, when congregations were become very numerous, the inquiry and deliberation were holden (perhaps then more commodiously) in the ecclesiastical college, called the presbytery; consisting of the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons. When this was over, the result of their inquiry and consultations was reported to the whole congregation belonging to that church, who were called together on purpose, in order to obtain their approbation of what had been done, and their consent to the resolution that had been taken; for, without their consent, no judgment could regularly be put in execution. Lectures on Eccles. History, L. iii. p. 32.

\* De Jure Laicorum sacerdotali, c. iii. sec. 10.

"without any reason, but a factious opposition" to what they hold most dear and sacred!

4. Evidence, of whatever kind, can only be estimated by the judgment. The minister must, therefore, presume, that his judgment is to be preferred to that of the whole church. You talk about "*unquestionable* evidence;" but your own case supposes the evidence to be, *in fact*, questioned by the majority of the church. The minister, as you put the case, thinks the evidence *unquestionable*; that is, merely his opinion. The church, on the contrary, thinks the proof, or the case made out by it, so very questionable, that they positively refuse to act upon it; that is the judgment of the church!

5. Lastly, The minister's plea for all this is to be his conscience; and he is to take it for granted, that the members of the church, or the great majority of them, have no conscience at all. They are to communicate with persons whom they believe to be immoral or disorderly; or, to sacrifice one another to these inherent rights of the minister, in cases and on evidence which they deem "questionable;" and are to be compelled so to do, "by the force of his authority!" but no account is to be made of their consciences in these matters! You admit, that the church may restrain a minister "in a mistaken or selfish use of his powers," and we apprehend that a minister could give no greater proof of "mistake or selfishness," or that he wished to use these powers for ends "not legitimate, for the gratification of private prejudice, interest, ambition, or other unworthy passions," than thus to plead his conscience in opposition to the solemn judgment and conscience of his church.

And now, having brought the Independent minister into this predicament with his flock, what is the next thing to be done? Why, "either he must compel obedience, by the force of his authority; or, if a man of conscience, [a great stickler for the inherent rights,] he must abandon so rebellious a flock, and seek one of a more christian [a more submissive and less conscientious] character." Alas! Sir, although all this talk about compelling obedience by the force of authority, may pass with Independent ministers, as an admirable illustration of your own spirit, they are well aware that such authority is neither derived from the Scriptures, nor could it be beneficially exercised in the Christian church! The plain English of it is, "unless I can have my own will, and my own way, in spite of you all, I will either uproot you as a church, or you shall uproot me as a minister!" There have been instances, in which ministers have been weak or wicked enough to press on such an extremity; but the judgment and conscience of the church is not to be the sport of such men!

The Dissenting ministers, in general, a pious, intelligent, and learned race of men, must, doubtless, feel very much obliged to you for this exposition of their inherent rights and conscientious duties. But unfortunately for your reputation and success with them, they have not so learned Christ! They know, that all the requisitions of the gospel are addressed to the understandings and the consciences of men, and can only be enforced, to any purpose, by moral considerations. Any other authority, however necessary and indeed inherent in the church, would, if vested in them *exclusively* as ministers, be of no value in their estimation. They have been taught, that should they exchange the proper character of a Christian pastor, for that lordly superiority, which you would affect, they must expect nothing but ruin to their churches. "‘Perfect love,’ says the Apostle John, ‘casteth out fear.’ It is no less true in the converse, ‘Perfect fear casteth out love.’ The great engine of the magistrate is terror; of the pastor, love. The advancement of the one, is the destruction of the other. To attempt to combine them in the same character, is to attempt to form a hideous monster at best!?" The celebrated Robert Hall, late of Leicester, now of Bristol, understands, we presume, his scriptural rights and conscientious duties quite as well as the Rev. Richard Watson. In 1825, Mr. Hall was attacked in the daily prints, for publicly expelling a member of his charge. He rested his defence on the judgment of his church; and intimates plainly enough his opinion of the minister, who should set up his own judgment in opposition to that of the church. His words are, "In that judgment I heartily concurred; but *had it been otherwise*, I could not have declined the *duty assigned me*, without assuming more of the high priest, than is consistent with my ideas of religious decorum." And this will apply to those superintendants in Methodism, who refuse to put motions regularly moved and seconded at the quarterly meetings. They have no fear of seeing such motions negatived, and refuse to put them only when they perceive that they are likely to be carried. They, therefore, set up their judgment in opposition to that of the church! They assume the high priest at the expense of religious decorum!

The great *panacea* in Methodism for healing the consciences of both church and minister, when thus wounded by conflict, is an appeal to the Conference! and this you think an immense advantage which we enjoy over Independent churches. You play upon the imaginary difficulty of these churches, and ask, "Where can the better part of the members [*better*, that is, tame and submissive to the minister] find redress? If a minority, they would have none but a separation." In voluntary societies, where an obstinate minority persists in opposing the general judgment and will of the



great majority, what other remedy ought they to have? "Whilst, in case of their being part of a Connexion, they equally with the minister would have their appeal to the *common authority*." That is, if they cannot (being a minority) outvote the majority, they may call in the district police to beat them down! Who does not see that the Connexion has nothing to do with all this? The Connexion is not called upon, the sense of the Connexion is in no way taken! It is a mere device, to give the minister and his party (the minority, however small) a victory over the church! "In Methodism," you tell us, "every minister, when factiously opposed, [when he cannot have his own way, and chooses to call the church factious,] instead of being placed in the alternative of *offending his conscience*, or of quitting his charge, has the power of resorting to authorities, acknowledged both by the people and by himself, for a redress of the grievance." To be sure he has, viz. to the leaders' meeting. But by these "common authorities" you mean special district meetings and Conferences! Now we deny, that since 1797, at any rate, either district meetings or Conference are, or have been, the common authorities in such cases, viz. in the admission and expulsion of members, and the trial of local officers. This was a main question discussed and settled in 1797. By the Concessions and Code of Laws of that year, these matters can now be transacted only "in conjunction with the leaders' meeting." But were it otherwise, the enlightened and intelligent Dissenting minister will discover nothing here that could improve his situation, save what his conscience would revolt at. He would perceive in your reasonings on this, as on every other subject in dispute, the same want of clear and distinct ideas, the same illogical reasoning, and the same absence of enlarged and comprehensive knowledge of the subject, of which we have already complained.

1. He would understand perfectly well how, in a matter of conscience, a difference between parties might be composed by the communication of light and conviction to the minds of the disputants; but he would not so clearly perceive how a case of conscience could be settled by an appeal to any authority, save the Word of God. Perhaps, Sir, you think the authority of Conference not much short of this standard?

2. He might be willing to ask advice, and thankful to receive information, but he would have very great difficulty in submitting his own *conscience* to any *human* authority: and, if the submission must be made, he would doubtless question within himself, whether he might not as well submit to the church of God, as to a conclave of brother ministers; who, having the same bias as himself, might possibly only confirm him in error! He would know, from the history of former synods and conclaves, that this was no new thing in the church.

3. This difficulty of submitting his own conscience to a common authority, would teach him to apprehend some difficulty on the part of the church. Instead, therefore, of applying your "infallible remedy," he would be apt to judge of it by the Leeds case; in which this appeal to a special district meeting cost the society upwards of 1000 souls! He might find little relief to his conscience in this sad alternative; and think it of little consequence, whether he were compelled "to quit his charge," or his charge compelled "to quit him!" And, inasmuch as a refusal to submit, in a matter of conscience, to a common authority, is no great offence in the estimation of a Dissenting minister, he would probably suspect that the men, who thus saved their consciences, were "the better part of the members!"

4. In short, every man of common sense and experience must perceive, that, however valuable the advice and counsel of other esteemed and prudent ministers may be in healing a private quarrel, or reconciling a personal difference between a minister and any of his flock; yet, in questions of authority and right, between the ministry on the one hand, and the church or laity on the other; and which are made, as you make them, matters of conscience; it is folly to talk of a *common* authority. If consciences can be reconciled by authority, why is the Christian church divided into so many sects and parties? Your "great advantage" of an appeal to a common authority, the creature of your own imagination, resolves itself into a mere aggravation of the disorder. It enlarges and hastens the separation you propose to prevent! But to talk of a common authority in such cases, composed, like the Methodist Conference, wholly of ministers, and in which the consciences of the members have no representative, is something worse than folly! It is here that the Dissenting minister will perceive the true object for which you contend. He will perceive, that the preservation of doctrine, morals, and *ordinary* discipline, is altogether out of the question, as in the Leeds case. But that, if every question affecting the rights and consciences of the church can be brought for ultimate decision before a conclave of ministers, (which was the great engine of papal policy,) then those ministers may establish any despotism they please in the Christian church! They not only *may* do this, but all experience goes to prove that they assuredly *will* do it! It is here that the conscience of the Dissenting minister would be a bar to his embracing your theory. Its only utility is to establish a power in the ministry, which he knows to be neither scriptural nor lawful; and which, therefore, he would not dare to claim.

XIV. This illustration of your principles from the case of Independent churches, is followed by an attempt to apply them

more directly to the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism. Here we travel over the same ground, the instances of check and counter-check being the same, and applied to the same cases, the admission and expulsion of members and local officers.

But it is of importance here to ascertain in the outset, whether Methodism do really acknowledge this right of admitting and expelling the members of her societies, to be *inherent* in her ministers; or whether she regard it as not *inherent*, but *derived*; and, if derived, from whom? They who set up claims to *inherent* rights should establish them by proof. This was your business; but, not being an easy task, you are content to insert this right in your list, and to take it for granted! We deny the right; but it certainly is not our business to prove a negative. Yet, in following a writer who asserts every thing, and proves nothing, we must either leave the reader in the dark, or travel much beyond the line of our necessary duty. We shall trouble ourselves no further, however, on this subject, the question being now purely Methodistical, than to refer to Mr. Wesley's opinion on this right. That opinion, with us, is decisive; we think it will be so with every unprejudiced reader.

Amongst the numerous opponents of Mr. Wesley, he acknowledged that the Rev. Mr. Church had treated him more as a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian, than any other. But Mr. Church pressed upon a tender point, on which Mr. Wesley, as an avowed clergyman of the Church of England, found it rather difficult to give a satisfactory reply. The point was, Mr. Wesley's right, as a clergyman, to form "a separate ecclesiastical society or communion, over which he had appointed himself a governor, and taken upon himself all the spiritual authority which the very highest church governor could claim." With the question between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Church we have nothing to do; but we cite the following passage to shew, that even Mr. Wesley's power to admit and expel members was not inherent, but derived from the society itself. And we follow his method, printing Mr. Church's argument in *italics*, and Mr. Wesley's replies in the ordinary type.

"How then will you vindicate all these powers? All *these* are, declaring those are no longer of our society. Here *is a manifest congregation. Either it belonged to the Church of England, or not. If it did not, you set up a separate communion against her; and how then are you injured, in being thought to have withdrawn from her?* I have nothing to do with this: the antecedent is false, therefore the consequence falls, of course. *If it did belong to the Church, shew where the Church gave you such authority of controuling and regulating it?*

" Authority of putting disorderly members out of that society? " The society itself gave me that authority! *Are not these powers INHERENT in her governors, and committed to the higher order of her clergy?* No; not the power of " excluding members from a private society," &c.—Wesley's Works, vol. xvi. p. 166. Ed. Bristol, 1772.

Thus, Sir, Mr. Wesley's notions were not quite so high as yours are! He had too much learning and good taste to plead the *jus divinum*, the *inherent* right! He admits his power to be derived from the society:—" *The society itself gave me that authority!*" We will add one quotation more from the preceding page. " *And took upon you all the spiritual authority which the very highest church governor could claim.* What! at Kingswood? In February, 1740-1? Not so. I took upon me no other authority (then and there, at least) than any steward of a society exerts, by the consent of the other members. I did neither more nor less than declare, that they who had broken our rules were no longer of our society."—Ibid. p. 155. Thus, then, according to Mr. Wesley, the right to expel from the Methodist society is, 1. Derived from the society. 2. It is to be exercised *with the consent* of the society. And, 3. It may, with such consent, be exercised by " *any steward.*" So much for your boasted *inherent* rights, considered as a Methodistical question!

But the power which the Connexion in general entrusted to Mr. Wesley, they did not think proper, after his decease, to entrust to the Methodist Conference, without exacting from them, by stipulation and treaty, what they were confident Mr. Wesley would voluntarily do. Mr. Wesley was not merely expected to " *consult,*" which is your favourite word, but in the exercise of this power he acted with the understood consent of the society. The Conference, however, is not merely *expected*, but is bound, by the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, to act " *in conjunction with the leaders' meeting.*"

" The leading guards against undue exercise of power as to the people, are, that when the leaders' meeting declare a person unfit to be admitted into society, no preacher shall receive him as a member; and that the delinquency of a member must be proved in the presence of a leaders' meeting, before he can be expelled. These instances are sufficient for my argument; and I need not, therefore, go into the case of local preachers, trustees, leaders, or into financial regulations."—Watson, p. 9.

Now here again, Sir, we have only to remark, that, understanding these "guards," thus quoted from the Concessions of 1797, as every honest man must and will understand them, we are quite satisfied. Notwithstanding all your misrepresentation and abuse, we desire NOTHING NEW in Methodism. This is the law; every true and sincere friend of Methodism



will wish to maintain it. We, ourselves, contend and wish for nothing more. But the Leeds case, Sir! Have you forgotten that case? This law was not acted upon at Leeds. A new and dishonest interpretation prevailed there. It was contended, that the rule merely required the delinquency to be proved "AT," or as you have it, "*before*," a leaders' meeting. But that it did not say, "*to the satisfaction of*" a leaders' meeting! Having acted upon this contemptible quibble, and made it serve your purpose, you afterwards became ashamed of it; and have since given it up in terms, though not in substance. In so many words, therefore, it is not to be found in your book. We were shocked indeed, and every honourable mind must be shocked, to find that Methodist preachers had proceeded to set aside rules so equitable, on pretensions so discreditable! But, although you surrender the shadow, you still grasp the substance. You give up the dishonest interpretation, and yet all your reasoning travels along with it, and is designed to answer the same end. It is for this purpose that you are so partial to the word "*consult*." The superintendant, you admit, "may, and ought to consult the leaders' meeting;" but, "it is clear there may be cases of which the ultimate decision must rest with him;" or, which is the same thing, with a special district meeting and the Conference! Will the respectable men in Methodism consent to be thus mocked and cajoled under the pretence of being consulted on matters which the superintendant has previously settled in his own study? It is for this purpose that, having stated the above simple rules, which no man can misunderstand or misinterpret, but through wilful blindness, you immediately follow them up with this artful inquiry, "The question then before us is, whether the Conference in 1797, or at any other time, conceded more than a power to guard the exercise of the rights of the ministry [read, the right of admitting and expelling members] against abuse; or whether it divided the duties and powers of the ministry, [read, the right of admitting and expelling members,] with the leaders' meeting?" Your motive for putting this question is explained by what follows:—"If the latter, then has a leaders' meeting, *in all cases*, no matter how unfounded, the power to forbid us to receive members into the church, to restrain us from expelling immoral members, &c., and that simply by withholding its concurrence." Watson, p. 10. Now what, we ask, is the object of this inquiry, but precisely that of the disgraceful quibble on the word "*at*," to which we have alluded. What possible motive can you have for putting such a question, but to get rid of the Concessions of 1797, and to recover to yourselves, in all cases which you choose to call or to make *extraordinary*, the power of admitting and expelling members and local officers, independently of the local meetings?

We have already had occasion to remark on your manner



of putting your cases, so as to take for granted, what no man in his senses can grant you ; and what you never can establish in proof or argument ! Thus you say, “ in all cases, *no matter how unfounded.*” But leaders’ meetings are not destitute of reason or principle. It is then impertinence in any man to assume what is so contrary to fact ; or rather, it is a proof to what an extremity you are driven to find even a plausible pretext for the power you claim. The local meetings, and especially when they have men of your party to deal with, have generally a pretty good reason to assign for their proceedings. Thus, at Leeds, (if it were possible for a moment to draw your attention to that case,) the local meeting had a very good foundation for refusing to concur in Mr. Johnson’s suspension. You had previously overturned all law in relation to the subject in dispute ; and had left the local authorities no remedy, but to meet and express their sense of your conduct. They, therefore, desired their Secretary, Mr. Johnson, to call a meeting for that purpose. Was there no foundation for refusing to suspend Mr. Johnson, for calling a meeting which they had requested him to call ? The meeting was an irregular one ! But who had rendered an irregular meeting necessary or desirable to the local authorities at Leeds ? How ridiculous to talk of “ all cases, no matter how unfounded.” If you will deluge the church with these bitter waters, you must expect that they will flow in one channel or another, regular or irregular ; and is it not just that, notwithstanding the vote of thanks, they should still recoil on your own party ?

But to return to your question :—what the Conference granted in 1797 is plain enough. They conceded an efficient check upon the power which the Society had intrusted to the preachers, of admitting and expelling members. The check consisted not in any division of your *ministerial* duties and powers ; it had nothing to do with such duties and powers ; but it authorized the leader’s meeting, *in all cases*, to judge and decide on the *evidence*, on which you propose to exercise the power of admission and expulsion thus entrusted to you. It requires you, before you put this latter power in execution, in any disputed case, to submit the *evidence* to the local meeting, as to a jury ; and to take its judgment thereon, and by which judgment you are bound. That this was the check, and to the full extent that we have stated, is manifest from all the clauses of the Concessions of 1797, relating to the subject. The quibble on the monosyllable “ at,” of which you are now ashamed, could apply to one phrase only, relating to the *expulsion* of a private member. As to the *admission* of members, it is completely shut out ; the language of the Concessions being, “ when the leaders’ meeting declare a person unfit to be admitted into Society, no preacher shall receive him as a member.” If this does not apply to “ all cases, no matter how unfounded,” then where are the exceptions ?

There are certainly none in the Concessions or Code of Laws of 1797. But, as to the appointment and removal of local officers; the language of the Concessions is, if possible, still more express. "No person shall be appointed a leader or steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the leaders' meeting; the nomination to be in the superintendant, and the approbation or disapprobation in the leaders' meeting." Is this language sufficiently express and clear? Does it include "all cases, no matter how unfounded?" Is there any exception, reservation, or restriction, in favour of your novel claims? You know, Sir, that throughout these Concessions there is none! But you cannot brook these checks on your high and imaginary powers! You wish to get rid of them! To avow this in plain English would be too barefaced; and, therefore, you make a stalking-horse of your consciences, and seek to conjure up a class of *extraordinary* cases! You talk of your responsibility to God, where no responsibility attaches; and startle at the thought of being rendered, in any case, "dependant upon co-ordinate authorities!" It is really amusing, in a Connexion like ours, to see a portion of Mr. Wesley's lay-preachers, (he would never allow you any loftier claim or title,) who happen to have been called out to more extensive labour as Itinerants, at the expense of their brethren, affecting so much conscientious alarm and terror, at the bare thought of being identified with these same brethren; or of having their high and spiritual powers put in commission, *even in a matter of evidence*, with men who exercise the same ministry and care of souls, in the same Connexion, and with at least equal zeal, fidelity, and success! "No absurdity," you tell us, "can be greater than that which this strange and novel view attributes to the Conference of 1797; viz., that it should make co-pastors of men who are not pastors; co-ministers of our excellent friends the leaders, who never professed to be ministers." Here the local preachers, some of whom rival you in talents and learning, and are therefore objects of jealousy, are tossed off as "men who are not pastors!" but the leaders, who do not profess to preach, and are therefore regarded with less distrust, are courted as, "our excellent friends, the leaders!" But no matter; just reverse the order of the two classes in this wonderful sentence, and tell us, Sir, whether the local preachers are *ministers*; and whether the leaders are *pastors*, in the Methodist Connexion? Could any absurdity, then, be greater, than to suppose, that the Conference of 1797 should make co-ministers of men, who really are co-ministers; and co-pastors of men, who really are co-pastors in the same Connexion?—that in judging of the *evidence* on which members may be admitted or expelled, the Conference should treat as "co-ordinate authorities," men

whose labours are not less owned of God than your labours; and to whom Methodism is not less indebted than to you, for her increase, her strength, and her prosperity? Is it not this, Sir, which shocks your pride and alarms your consciences?\*

\* Mr. Beecham's Essay did not fall under our notice, until after the greater part of this Reply was in type. We, therefore, have found great difficulty in making room for a condensed note, on one or two points. We perceive that he has drawn together whatever he could in support of the favourite system, but we have not thought it of sufficient importance, to induce us to print an additional sheet. In substance, this Reply is a sufficient answer to all he has said against our views of this controversy. We observe, that, as one prop of Conference power, he claims the pastoral office *exclusively* for travelling preachers; and denies any share of it to local preachers and leaders! To make this out, he sets down the local preachers and leaders as *deacons* only; and shows, from Scott on 1 Tim. iii. 13, that "the deacons were principally appointed to dispense the charity of the church, and to manage its temporal concerns; yet they preached occasionally, or taught in private, or were readers in the public assemblies." All this we admit as to deacons; but, however much it may apply to our stewards, it applies not at all to local preachers and leaders; who are not appointed *principally*, nor at all, to manage the temporal concerns of the church, having merely a voice like the travelling preachers in the local meetings. Their offices are purely spiritual. That of the leader is essentially pastoral; and Mr. B. admits, (p. 105,) that "the *teaching* of the local preacher is of the higher kind of teaching," (that is, *preaching*, which is the highest gift and endowment in the church.) Nor will Mr. B. gain any thing by his laboured exposition, from a certain class of critics, of various passages of Scripture, which are thought to bear on this question. These passages have been so frequently and variously expounded on all sides, by men of equal learning and talents, that each party, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, retains his own interpretation, and rejects those of his opponents. Into this question, of course, we cannot enter. It belongs not to our question of Methodistical law; but, as Dr. Campbell remarks, "the practice of the primitive church is the best commentary." We admit, however, the right of the inspired Apostles, to rule with the very highest authority, both the pastors and the people; yet the church was to try even the Apostles; Rev. ii. 2. Saving always the right of private judgment and conscience, which forbids us to allow any man to have dominion over our faith, and the right of the church, which is not to be "lorded over," even by inspired men; we admit the right of *ordinary* pastors to rule in (not over) the church, for edification; but so as it be not "as lords over God's heritage; but being ensamples to the flock," 1 Peter v. 3. And if we should admit a great deal more; nay, all for which Mr. B. contends, as to this power of rule and authority in pastors, what does he gain by it? We contend for the Methodistical rights of the local Presbyteries; and we maintain, that the local preachers and leaders have all the qualifications, which St. Paul lays down as requisite for a Bishop or Presbyter, 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. Titus i. 6—9. They are all examined as to their knowledge of our doctrines, and selected for their moral and religious qualifications. The local preachers are strictly examined also, as to their call to preach. They are all nominated, and, with the consent of the local meetings, appointed to office by the superintendants of circuits. After all this, it is not competent to Mr. B. to contend, that they are not *διδασκτικοί*, *apt to teach*. They are, therefore, not deacons, but elders of the church. Now, it will not be denied, that to the *πρεσβυτεροι*, the Presbyters or Elders, whom Titus was required to ordain in every city, were committed every right, power, and privilege, which belong to *ordinary* or *uninspired* ministers.

XV. The new doctrine of an appeal to the Conference "from any person whatever thinking himself aggrieved," (Watson, p. 9,) is the twin doctrine with that of the pretended

But Mr. B. thinks he discovers from the Scripture, that a man cannot be a pastor, unless, 1. He is called to rule or govern, as well as teach; and 2. be exclusively given up to the work of the ministry. We will take Mr. B. on his own ground, right or wrong; and, first, The call of the local preachers and leaders to teach and preach being admitted, we maintain, that, Methodistically, they are called to rule also. Does not the leader rule in his class?—is he not a leader, if Mr. B. will have it so, in the one point *only* of Christian experience? but who can lead a class without perpetually dwelling on all the essential points of faith and practice, or what experience can there be where these essentials are omitted? Again, the Conference of 1797 says, "Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands." Are not the men thus invested with the executive government rulers in the church?—And if possessing the highest gift and endowment of the Spirit, the gift of prophesying or preaching, they are not acknowledged as entitled to rule, who is it that denies them this right? Is it not denied by the travelling preachers? and is not the motive sufficiently obvious, viz., that they may keep all the rule to themselves? But, *secondly*, the local preachers and leaders follow trades; and on this ground their rights as ministers and pastors are denied! Mr. B., aware that the Apostles also wrought at their trades occasionally, makes a salvo here in their favour. With them, it was a case of necessity, arising out of the poverty or neglect of the churches; and, therefore, in submitting to labour, they lost none of their inherent rights. Now, we admit all that Mr. B. can say about the right of ministers to live by the Gospel; but St. Paul refused to avail himself of the liberality of the Corinthians when offered. The reason he assigns was, not Mr. B.'s *necessity*, but because no man should make his glorying void. Here, then, is a second reason for not being chargeable to the churches. A third reason, he assigns in another epistle, for refusing to "eat any man's bread for nought," viz., "not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us," 2 Thess. iii. 9. Can Mr. B., however, persuade himself or others, that the presbyters or elders, ordained in every city, in times when the Apostles themselves were obliged to labour for their bread, were all maintained by the churches? To these men, we have observed, was committed all the power which can belong to ministers and pastors. In those primitive days, when the gifts and graces of the Spirit were so abundantly poured out, a multitude of men were raised up for the edification of the church and the spread of the gospel, but the infant churches could not maintain them. They therefore continued to labour at their trades; and, with all their inherent rights as ministers and pastors, were nothing more than local preachers and leaders. As the churches became settled, and increased in numbers and wealth, they gradually made a settled provision for one or more of these ministers; and who, from being thus exclusively given up to the ministry, obtained afterwards the title of Bishop, to distinguish him from his brother Presbyters; a distinction unknown in the New Testament, where the terms Bishop and Presbyter are used synonymously. But this Bishop, when thus maintained and distinguished, obtained no authority over his brethren, except as Chairman or President in their assemblies. Still, as Jerome remarks, "*communio Presbyterorum concilio Ecclesiæ gubernabantur*,"—the churches were governed by the common council of the Presbyters." Hieron. in 1 Tit. Now the case was precisely the same with Methodism, which was a revival of religion, in many respects resembling the Pentecostal age. It pleased God to pour out his Spirit abundantly, and a multitude of men were "moved by the Holy Ghost," not to take upon themselves the management of the temporal affairs



right of special district meetings to interfere in *local* affairs of the people. As Methodistical questions, nearly the same

of the church, as deacons, but to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; and God wrought mightily by these men, so that their call could not be questioned. But Methodism could not maintain more than a small proportion of these men; she therefore called out as itinerants (not as pastors) as many as she could support. The rest, like the ancient Presbyters of the primitive church, continued to support themselves, and to exercise their spiritual gifts and *divine* calling in a local sphere. They have the same *right* to be maintained by the church as the others; but the church cannot supply the means. They not only, therefore, glory, like St. Paul, in being chargeable to no man, but they contribute liberally to support those who have been called out. Are they to be stopped of this boasting? Are the necessities of the church to be made the plea for denying them the rights of the ancient Presbyters; and are the men whom they thus contribute to support, to be the first to turn round upon them, and tell them they are not ministers and pastors? Can Methodism dispense with her local preachers and leaders? In every circuit she has three or four times as many societies and congregations as she has travelling preachers. Who supplies these congregations and societies with ministerial and pastoral service? The immense majority of our Sabbath congregations, with very few and occasional exceptions, are supplied with none but local preachers; and the people well know that the pastoral charge devolves almost entirely on the leaders. Are these ministrations efficient? Are they owned of God? Why then deny that those who thus efficiently serve the church are ministers and pastors? Why make the *necessities* of the church the plea for denying the rights and calling of her efficient ministers and pastors? If Methodism be thus effectually served by her local preachers and leaders; if she cannot do without them, and yet cannot maintain them; why are they to be thus insulted and degraded from that sphere and order in which they were called of God?

"The Apostles of Christ," remarks the venerable Fletcher, "thought it no disgrace to follow some useful occupation, for the relief of their temporal necessities—when, instead of eating the bread of idleness, they cast their nets, alternately, for fishes and for men—they quitted the tabernacles in which they were wont to labour, for the sacred recreation of setting before sinners *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. This ardent charity, like St. Paul's, is one of those mysterious things which are perfectly incomprehensible to the natural man, and which appear to him as the extremest folly."\* "The morality of the gospel," observes Dr. Chalmers, "is not more strenuous on the side of the duty of giving this world's goods when it is needed, than it is against the desire of receiving when it is not needed. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and therefore less blessed to receive than to give. For the enforcement of this principle, among the poorer brethren, did Paul give up a vast portion of his Apostolical time and labour; and that he might be an ensample to the flock, of working with his own hands, rather than to be burdensome, did he set himself down to the occupation of a tent-maker. But there is no more striking indication of the whole spirit and character of the gospel in this matter, than the example of him who is the author of it—and of whom we read these affecting words, that 'he came into the world not to be ministered unto; but to minister.' It is a righteous thing in him who has of this world's goods, to minister to the necessities of others; but it is a still higher attainment of righteousness in him, who has nothing but the daily earnings of his daily work to depend upon, so to manage and to strive, that he shall not need to be ministered unto."

\* Portrait of St. Paul.



arguments will apply to each, and they must stand or fall together. For this reason we did not think it necessary to enter

We have been roused to say these things in self-defence; at the same time we are no advocates for confusion and disorder in the church of God. Mr. B. mistakes his ground when he appeals to Scripture, in order to found a distinction as to *order* between travelling and local preachers. All ministers of religion, called and admitted to teach and preach, are of the same order, and have the same *inherent* rights. But we admit the right of the church to appoint men to office and station. The distinction then lies, not in order, nor in any difference as to inherent rights, but in the conventional rights and powers of office. The respective offices of travelling preacher, local preacher, and leader, are distinct, and their rights and duties are distinct. But these offices belong to the peculiar economy of Methodism, and are not common to other churches. In the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, there are important variations as to these offices. There the local preacher administers all the ordinances of the church, the same as the travelling preacher; and the itinerancy was confined there to single men. When a man married, he became a local preacher again. On this footing, all the moderate and most able advocates of Episcopacy have rested its defence. The church, they have said, may set up and regulate whatever offices she finds convenient; and, calling men to fill these offices, she may invest them with whatever powers she pleases. But every church must have a ministry of one kind or another; and the inherent rights of the ministry remain the same, although in the regulations of office they may not all be called into exercise. Thus *inherently* a local preacher has the right to administer all the ordinances of the church; but Methodism devolves that duty on the travelling preachers, and does not call the local preacher to perform it. But what Methodist will say that a man, called of God and the church to preach the gospel, might not, with the consent of the church, lawfully and effectually administer every ordinance of the church? Or who will deny that the administration of these ordinances by the local preachers of America is valid and effectual? Not having the same lofty notions of inherent rights as some appear to have, we are content with things as they are established amongst us; we wish not for any change; all we desire is to be allowed to go on, and serve our generation, without being trampled upon and degraded in our office by the dominant party in the Conference.

On another ground, and so far as our question is concerned, Mr. B. is equally wide of the mark, in his appeal to Scripture in support of the right of ministers to rule the church. Our notions, however, on this subject are not so relaxed as Mr. B. may imagine. Were we called upon to address the members of our classes on this head, we should strenuously enforce on them the duty of paying all proper deference and respect to their ministers; and, doubtless, in the language of many of the passages of Scripture which Mr. B. quotes. A man who should unreasonably oppose, or disrespectfully treat, a minister, would receive no countenance or indulgence from us. But, admitting all this, what has it to do with the question; which is, not how far Christians in general are bound to obey their ministers, but whether the judgment and conscience of the church, as expressed in the decisions of her local Presbytery, are to be overruled and set aside by the will of the minister? All the texts of Scripture which Mr. B. can collect will never establish such a right in the ministry; and one would really think, that to state the question would be a sufficient refutation of so monstrous a claim! We recommend those who are in any danger of being infected by the servile principles, now so zealously inculcated, to inform themselves, from standard writers, as to the practice of the primitive church in the first and second centuries; and this practice they will find to accord with the spirit inculcated by our Lord. Matt. xx. 25—28. (See Campbell on the Gospels, vol. iv. p. 129.)

on that subject in our Address to the last Conference. We shall now, however, beg leave to offer a few general remarks on this newly attempted appellat jurisdiction of the Methodist Conference.

1. We have already observed, that the doctrine of appeals from the judgment of the churches to that of a conclave of ministers, or ecclesiastical dignitaries, claiming universal ascendancy in all spiritual matters, was the grand engine of papal policy, and one of the most powerful means by which the Roman See established its supremacy. It was wholly unknown in the first and best period of the primitive church, (the canonists divided the primitive church into two periods, which they denominated *prima primitiva*, and *secunda primitiva*) and was not introduced until a very general corruption had overspread the Christian world. We can be at no loss, therefore, to estimate the character of a new jurisdiction, assumed by the Roman Pontiff over the provincial churches, during such a period. The "very first appeal of any note" was that of the heresiarch, Pelagius, and his disciple, Celestius, from the sentence of an African Synod, by whom their doctrine had been condemned. This occurred not earlier than the commencement of the fifth century. The claims of the haughty Pontiff, then newly called to the papal chair, were, however, firmly resisted by the Africans. They convened another Synod at Carthage, in which they reviewed and confirmed their former decision, without paying the slightest deference to the authority of Pope Zozimus, notwithstanding he had already proceeded so far as to depose and excommunicate two of their presbyters. This was not the first, nor was it the last, instance in which the church was indebted for the defence of her liberties to the sable sons of Africa. It is satisfactory to know, that in this affair of the appeal, the ambitious patriarch of Rome was foiled in all his endeavours to establish his prerogative; and that at length he found himself under the necessity of anathematizing, as impious, what, in his zeal for power, he had pronounced to be innocent. "In the whole affair," remarks a learned writer, "Rome evidently shewed that, with her, doctrine was ever but a secondary consideration, the primary object was invariably power;"—a remark which some reverend aspirants of the present day would do well to consider! How the church proceeded in determining all cases which arose within her local presbytery, we have shown in a note, page 68. The point to which we now invite attention is, that for several centuries, no such thing was known as an appeal, in any case, from the judgment of the church, to that of a council of ministers exclusively, judging and deciding in ecclesiastical affairs independently of the church. The introduction of such appeals was the subtle device of Antichrist, designed to

advance the dominion of the priesthood, productive of no good whatever to the church, but tending directly and surely to enslave and corrupt her!

2. An appellant jurisdiction, from the judgment of the local presbyteries of every society and circuit throughout the Methodist Connexion, you claim for the Methodist Conference! A very modest claim, certainly! that you are to be the absolute and final arbiters of the religious liberties, rights, and privileges, of about half a million of people; and, if to the Societies, we add the congregations that attend our ministry, we may say, of several millions of people. As this claim extends, of course, to all our foreign stations, it will invest you with a spiritual supremacy over a territorial surface, which places you nearly on a level with papal Rome, as to extent of jurisdiction! As usual with you, and with all who have ambition to prefer such claims, to claim, and to take for granted, is the same thing! When, therefore, we look for some proof or argument in support of this high pretension, we have still nothing but bold assertion and unblushing assurance! You condescend not to reason upon your imaginary right; you cite not a single authority, nor make the slightest appeal to the fundamental laws of the Connexion! You simply assert, and of course we are expected to admit, that "against the possible abuse of which checks themselves [the Concessions of 1797,] an APPEAL *always lay* to the Conference from *any person whatever thinking himself aggrieved.*" Watson, p. 9.

How is it possible to reason with a man, who thus takes every thing for granted, and makes the boldest assertions, without adducing the slightest evidence? We deny this appellant jurisdiction thus claimed for the Methodist Conference! We admit in them no right whatever to receive or determine any appeals, except against the proceedings and conduct of travelling preachers. This is our answer, and a sufficient answer. We are not to be called upon, to prove the negative of an unfounded claim. They, who prefer claims to power and authority over their fellow-Christians, are bound to make them out and to support them by proof.

Our friends, however, throughout the Connexion are anxious for information. Although, therefore, you are answered, it may be desirable to afford them further satisfaction. For their sake alone we extend these remarks.

3. Whilst boldly asserting, and dogmatizing in support of, this high and haughty claim, you appear painfully conscious, that there is not a single argument which can be brought against the judgment of the local presbyteries,—against leaders' meetings and local preachers' meetings, which may not with equal, or still greater effect, be brought against the Conference. Our controversy is not so much with the Metho-

dist Conference, as with your party, by whom that Conference has been so lamentably committed and dishonoured. We are therefore happy in being relieved from the task of pressing this argument against the Conference by your own admission. "You may, indeed, say, that the Conference itself may fall "into the very evils to which you suppose a particular society "to be liable. This I grant." Watson, p. 14. Do you indeed grant this, Sir? then there is an end of all pretence for removing the jurisdiction from the local presbyteries! Were we to handle this argument, we should prove that the Conference, subject to the prevalence of parties like that which now predominates, is much more in danger of falling into these evils, than the local meetings, but this admission is sufficient for our argument. The general remarks by which you would gloss it over, are too meagre and futile to require exposure; "great bodies are less liable to change (to become a prey to faction and party) than smaller ones!" "A Connexion, like ours, has within itself more internal checks and counteractions than Independency!" "It necessarily makes the best provision, which anxious care and prudent foresight can devise, against corruptions!"—And is it really on such pleas as these, that we are called upon to surrender the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, to the ambitious party in the Methodist Conference! The Methodist Connexion (not the Conference, you do not pretend that) has indeed more internal checks and counteractions than Independency, for which we never contended, and with which we have nothing to do. Our fathers, in 1797, did, indeed, make the best provisions which anxious care and prudent foresight could devise against corruption! But these checks and counteractions, these prudent provisions, are to be found in the fundamental laws of the Connexion, and not in your deceptive reasonings!

4. If we touch lightly your party, and enter not more fully into its history and conduct, it is not that we have not been furnished with ample materials; but because we are unwilling to prejudice the Conference in the estimation of the public, more than their own weakness, in submitting to this party, has already done. We hope, that they will still have the spirit and the prudence to redeem themselves. It is high time that they were roused; for assuredly the Connexion will not much longer endure the measures of this party. In them we see realized the fears of the two Wesleys, and, indeed, all that the Methodist Connexion ever had seriously to fear! "John," said Mr. Charles Wesley to his brother, "there will arise men in your Conference who will overturn the Connexion." Mr. Wesley faintly replied, "I hope not, brother!" That Mr. Wesley was, however, painfully apprehensive of this result, is proved by his letter to the Conference of 1797, written with his dying hand, and inserted in the Minutes of



Conference of that year, vol. i. p. 234. Mr. Wesley was afraid, that the One Hundred Preachers, whom, by the Deed of 1784, he had constituted the LEGAL Conference, might avail themselves of the provisions of that Deed to assume superiority over their brethren. The original preachers of the hundred, however, acted as faithful and disinterested men. Their business was to do the work of HIM that sent them. They wanted, in general, (we speak of them as a body,) neither power nor distinction beyond what this work necessarily gave them. They, therefore, immediately resolved, that all the preachers in full connexion, should enjoy every privilege which the members of the Hundred enjoyed. (Minutes of Conference, 1791.) They determined, that all vacancies, as they occurred in the HUNDRED, should be filled up by SENIORITY; and retained nothing to themselves, but the election of the President and the Secretary, according to the terms of the Deed. All this was equitable and just. It was more; it was a model of disinterestedness and liberality, and proves both the wisdom and purity of the original Conference. The only distinction which could tempt ambition amongst the junior preachers, viz., to become members of the HUNDRED, could now only be gained by seniority; and the only offices which demanded superior talent and experience, were amply provided for, by the eligibility of one hundred fathers of the Connexion.

In the lapse of about twenty years from the death of Mr. Wesley, a faction arose amongst some of the junior preachers, who boasted superior talents, and complained of the want of sufficient scope and excitement, to employ these talents for the good of the Connexion. By the decision of the Conference of 1791, to which we have referred, these men had all the power and privilege, of course, that their brethren had, and equal opportunity of serving the Connexion. The best way of serving the church, would, doubtless, have been to imitate Mr. Wesley and the apostles, in faith, zeal, and labours! Methodism always afforded ample scope for men of this description, and they who had hearts to follow so bright an example did not want motive. But this party thought it an intolerable hardship, that they could not leap over the heads of the *senior* brethren, and become members of the HUNDRED, before those whom length of service pointed out as first entitled to that honour. They might perchance to die early in life; and, in that event, could never have an opportunity of displaying their great talents, as President and Secretary of the Conference! Although, in every respect, on an equality with their brethren, they had the face to talk of the "bitter herbs" of servitude; and insisted, that a double apprenticeship of fourteen years was, in all conscience, a sufficient qualification for any office in Methodism! "Methodism," it has been said, "is as much opposed to democracy as to sin;" and yet it



should seem, that she has not been able to preserve even her Conference pure from that infectious spirit, worse than democracy,—a spirit which loudly talks of popular rights, and eagerly grasps the reins of power! This popular party increased; and, after disturbing several Conferences with their claims and clamours, they at last bore down all opposition. We copy the following passages from CROWTHER'S PORTRAITURE of METHODISM:—

“On Monday, July 25, 1814, the Seventy-first Conference began at Bristol, and continued until the evening of Wednesday, the 10th of August. Dr. Adam Clarke was chosen President, and Mr. Jabez Bunting, Secretary. Prior to the choosing of these officers, it was agreed, (contrary to former practice,) that all who shall have travelled fourteen years, shall vote in the choice of the President and Secretary. All such, who were present, voted by ballot, along with the legalized Hundred.”

“At the same time, it was agreed, that whereas we had formerly filled up the vacancies in the Hundred, according to seniority in the candidates, that henceforth, when there are four vacancies, three of these shall be filled up by seniority, and the fourth by the ballot of the Conference, without regard to seniority. It was upon this ground, that Mr. Bunting was chosen a member of the Hundred, and thereby became eligible to the office of principal Secretary to the Conference.” *Portraiture of Methodism*, p. 160.

Ambition, thus trampling on the rights of the senior preachers, who, by patient labour and long service, were become entitled to admission under the old regulation, but were now rudely thrust back, eagerly seized the propitious moment, and, by a bold effort, leaped first into the Hundred; and then into office, without waiting to take breath! The great object being now realized, the party, for some time, conducted itself with tolerable propriety. They required this time gradually to fill up their ranks, and consolidate their newly acquired strength. There was, also, still a sufficient number of the old men of weight and influence to command respect. But these gradually declined and died. At length their number became small, and they were soon made to feel the full effects of their imprudence! But, our object is not an attack upon the Conference; we therefore, notwithstanding we are thereby prevented a just exposure of your party, throw a veil over many things which we should otherwise state. It was necessary, however, to go thus far into particulars, in order that we might understand what that government is, which claims an appellat jurisdiction over the Connexion, and the final decision of every question, affecting the local interests and the religious rights and privileges of the circuits and societies.

5. That Mr. Wesley ever contemplated any such jurisdiction, as vested in the Conference, is not probable, from the fact of his total silence on the subject. Where does he ever intimate such a thing? Mr. Wesley established in the Conference an absolute jurisdiction over its own members, the preachers; and against them an *appeal*, therefore, *always* lay to the Conference. It is by not distinguishing this right of appeal against preachers, from that which you are anxious to establish against the local jurisdictions, as well as from the acknowledged inattention of our people generally to the principles of our constitution, that some colour has of late been given to your novel claims. But Mr. Wesley's opinion of the judgment of synods and conclaves generally, may be gathered from the account he has inserted in the Magazine of the Synod of Dort. Episcopius, one of the Remonstrants, said, as he went out of that assembly, "Let God judge between the synod and us, concerning the crafts, the deceits, and the lies laid to our charge!" The Leeds people, we believe, are now saying pretty much the same thing, concerning the treatment of their case by the last Conference! And what else can we say, Sir, when we turn to the Minutes of the last Conference, to your "Affectionate Address," and to the Methodist Magazine? The passage, however, to which we allude, is as follows:—"Some foreign divines expressed a great uneasiness at the transactions of the synod against the Remonstrants. They said, 'the Remonstrants have been wronged; they should not have been treated in that manner. We have been imposed upon by the Moderator (the President) and his cabal, who formed a synod among themselves, and concerted in private those things which they had a mind to bring to a good issue.' Martinius told his friends, 'I believe, now, what Gregory Nazianzen says,\* that he had never seen any council which had a happy success; but rather increased the evil instead of removing it. I declare, as well as that father, that I shall never more set my foot in any synod. O, Dort! Dort! would to God I had never seen thee!' The same divine, having met a Remonstrant, told him, 'the synod is a mere farce, in which the politicians act the main part.'" We fear the Leeds people will think we are stating their case, as it was disposed of at the last Conference; and, especially, if we add, "The Remonstrants complained

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\* The passage from Gregory is as follows:—"Equidem ut vere quod res est scribam, prorsus decrevi fugere omnem conventum episcoporum; nullius enim concilii bonum exitum unquam vidi; concilia enim non minuunt mala, sed augent potius.—To say the truth, I am utterly determined never to come to any Council of Bishops; for I never yet saw a good end of any Council; for Councils abate not evils, but rather increase them."

“ that they had been expelled for refusing to be judged by their  
 “ adversaries. They said, it was no new thing to avoid the  
 “ decisions of a partial synod ;—that many doctors of the  
 “ church, both ancients and moderns, had refused to appear  
 “ before such assemblies ; or went away when they perceived  
 “ that their enemies were to be their judges ; that, for the  
 “ same reason, the Protestants would not submit to the judg-  
 “ ment of the Council of Trent. They added, that in all civil  
 “ courts, a suspicion of partiality was one of the main reasons  
 “ to except against a judge. They complained particularly of  
 “ the Moderator,” &c.—*Arminian Magazine*, vol. i. pp. 55, 148.

It was not to be expected, that after all this, Mr. Wesley should vest any such jurisdiction, as that now claimed in the Methodist Conference. He did not, in fact, do so ! He constituted the Conference for the sake of the itinerancy ; and he defined their powers by the Deed of Declaration of 1784. But neither in this Deed, nor in any other document, did he ever authorize the Conference to hear and determine appeals from the local jurisdictions of the circuits and societies. On the contrary, he limited the sittings of the Conference to three weeks, at the utmost ; a period which, considering the other business of the Conference, is utterly incompatible with the jurisdiction thus attempted. But we will not at present enter into the question of the Constitution of the Conference as a Court of Appeal. To those who have any acquaintance with such matters, the very idea is ridiculous.

This appellant jurisdiction, then, was not derived from Mr. Wesley ; much less was it admitted by the delegates of 1795 and 1797 ! In the Plan of Pacification, the Concessions, and the Code of Laws, although these documents admit and invite appeals against travelling preachers, yet there is not a hint nor an allusion to any such power or jurisdiction in the Conference, over the *local* presbyteries. Neither do we find any trace of it in the Minutes of Conference, nor in any of the writers on the constitution of Methodism ; nor even in the Magazine. But of late, that publication has been made subservient to the purposes of your party. Like the new jurisdiction claimed for special district meetings in *local* affairs, this appellant jurisdiction of the Conference rests entirely upon your novel and perverse construction of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797—you can adduce no other authority for it ! In the absence, however, of all authority on your part in support of these novel and unfounded claims, we shall, in our next section, produce you a direct and unimpeachable testimony against them.

XVI. We come now to meet a general objection to our “ position,” that “ the Conference should not interfere,” in any cases whatever, with the local jurisdictions ;—that is, in the

trial of local officers, the admission and expulsion of members; and the general management of local affairs. This "position," you tell us, "although much empty effort is used to deceive, [all the deception, Sir, is on your side, and it is very gross!] is *most easily refuted* by the fact, that this is a discovery for the first time made. It was never so understood, certainly, by preachers or people; never urged in any former dispute." The paragraph from which this passage is quoted, and which has excited our compassion, as being one of the most intemperate and splenetic in your book, thus concludes,—“Its novelty is, however, fatal to the argument; for a practical principle could never have been kept out of sight for more than thirty years.” Watson, p. 21. For your sake, Sir, we have suppressed the *personal* abuse, which you have mixed up with the above argument.

To expect a man to reason, whilst in such a temper, were in vain; we are not surprised, therefore, to discover here the same confusion of ideas, and the same want of precision, both of thought and argument, which distinguish you throughout. Our position, Sir, is a *negative* position.—We *deny* the right of special district meetings and Conferences, to interfere in *local* affairs, except in the case of travelling preachers. You have not coolness, however, to distinguish between what is *negative* and what is *positive*! and, therefore, we are told that a *practical* principle could never have been kept out of sight for more than thirty years! That is true; but the practical principle is all on your side, not on ours! You claim the right of interference; this is the only practical principle involved in the question. Like most men, therefore, under the influence of strong passion, you have only injured yourself by this argument. As against us, it is utterly inapplicable and nugatory. But, as against yourself, it is a very good argument; and by it we have, at page 58, overturned your whole theory! “a practical principle could never have been kept out of sight more than thirty years!” Where, then, are your former special district meetings, resembling that at Leeds?—where the votes of thanks, and resolutions of the Conference, relating to such meetings? We have requested you to favour us with a sight of these printed resolutions and thanks.

But our position is “*most easily refuted*,” by the fact of its “*novelty*!” We do not wish to break a bruised reed, and therefore pass direct to the argument. Many publications have appeared on the subject of the Methodist Constitution, since 1797; but not one that we ever met with, even hints at this right of interference by special district meetings, or at an appeal from the local jurisdictions to the Conference, in the matters in question. Mr. Myles, in his *Chronological History*, and Mr. Crowther, in his *Portraiture of Methodism*,

both old preachers and parties to the treaty of 1797, have carefully set forth the powers and jurisdiction of the Conference, and of district meetings; but they are evidently both strangers alike to the right of interference, and to the appellant jurisdiction! Several attacks on Methodism have appeared, in which the Conference has been charged with assuming and exercising tyrannical powers. The Concessions made to the people, in 1795 and 1797, have, in answer, been invariably pleaded, to show that the Conference claimed and exercised no *arbitrary* or *absolute* power. All these publications, both histories and defences, treat of the Concessions; and particularly of the right of leaders' meetings, &c., in the admission and expulsion of local officers and members of society; but they all understand them as *positive* and *absolute*! There is no intimation of any right of interference in *extraordinary* cases; of any exceptionary power to suspend the laws of the Connexion; or of any appellant jurisdiction! All these phantoms have sprung up with your party, and are only to be found in your modern publications! Now, "a practical principle could never have been kept out of sight for more than thirty years;" if, therefore, such rights ever existed, there must have existed some trace of them in Methodism!

But, we are to prove every thing, *negative* as well as *positive*; and, undertaking what you have no right to expect from us, we promised you, in our last section, a direct and unexceptionable testimony against these novel claims.

In the year 1804 there appeared an anonymous pamphlet, entitled, "STRICTURES ON METHODISM, by a CAREFUL OBSERVER;" with a Latin motto in the title page, which sufficiently indicates the character of the work. The writer, like yourself, Sir, deals only in general matters, and does not profess to go into particulars! His main object was a violent attack on the rights conceded to the local meetings, by the Conference of 1797. Being of the true *ultra* school; he could discover nothing in the demand for these Concessions, but "the disorganizing spirit of the times," and "the mania for chimerical rights which was desolating Europe!" He could, moreover, talk as freely and as roundly as you and your party do, about anarchy, faction, insubordination, a capricious oligarchy, and a world of nonsense, which, however it may apply to civil states, can have nothing to do with a voluntary religious society, in which men can only be ruled by conviction of what is right and proper. When we hear you mourning over the loss of absolute power by the Methodist Conference, we could almost vouch that you had stolen your dolorous dirges from the pages of this writer; for you vent the same heavy and plaintive notes, and in the same melancholy key! However, Sir, this author, though an enemy



to our liberties, was an honest man. He betrays, unhappily, the spirit with which our fathers had to contend in 1797, when they wrung from the Conference this acknowledgment of their just and scriptural rights, (we do not mean *popular* rights, Sir, we have never contended for them; we mean the rights of the *local* presbyteries,—of your co-ministers and co-pastors, the local preachers and leaders,) but he does not, like you, attempt to subvert and deny them. We extract the following passages from his pamphlet.

“The Conference, for the sake of peace, conceded to the clamorous faction, who called themselves the people, [the delegates of 1797! whom Mr. Vevers calls, ‘the friends of religious liberty, and of primitive and genuine Methodism,’] one degree of authority after another, till they *put it out of their own power* to dismiss a leader from his office, without the sanction of a leaders’ meeting; or take a preacher, however qualified, into their Connexion, if a majority at a quarterly meeting should express its disapprobation. The leaders’ meeting *being constituted judges of themselves and the people*, the transition was easy to their determining, that no preacher should be continued a second year, if they resolved on his removal. This last degree of authority they assumed, for it was never conceded; but this does not prevent their exercising it, *without control, nor is there any appeal from their decision.*” pp. 85, 86.

Again: “Beside, should the latter (the preachers) through passion or prejudice decide unjustly, the injured party may have THEM called to account for their conduct, at the annual district meetings and Conference. In these assemblies, *charges against preachers from any quarter* are duly attended to; and every degree of weight is allowed to them, which they justly merit. But *according to the new organizing plan adopted*, [the Concessions of 1797,] however unjust the decisions of a leaders’ meeting may be, the injured party HAS NO APPEAL.” pp. 122, 123.

The above quotations are sufficient; in them is contained all for which we contended in our Address and Resolutions; viz., That travelling preachers *only* are amenable to district meetings;—that, by the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, leaders’ meetings are constituted judges of *themselves and the people*;—and, that their authority in these matters is *without control and without appeal*. Now all this was published five and twenty years ago! What, then, becomes of your assertions, that the discovery was first made by us, and that it was never so understood, certainly, by preachers or people? Where now is your “*most easy*” refutation; and how is the novelty of our position fatal to the argument? Did you make all these assertions in total ignorance? That

is hard to believe! but if we should admit such a palliation, for it is no excuse, what shall we say to the unmeasured abuse and *personal* insult, which you have mixed up with this pretence of novelty, and which now turns out to have no better foundation than your ignorance?

We adduce the above quotations, however, not merely to free our construction from the charge of *novelty*; but as a direct and unimpeachable testimony, from a very competent authority, in support of that construction. The pamphlet from which they are extracted, was written, as you doubtless are aware, by a Methodist preacher, of some note amongst you for intelligence and information; and who, a few years ago, was connected with the Magazine. What is still more important, he was one of the 145 preachers present at the Conference of 1797, who actually made the Concessions in question, and signed the solemn declaration, which we have copied from the Minutes of that year, as "*voluntarily and in good faith*" approving of, and engaging to comply therewith. Seven years after, he thought proper to publish his opinions on Methodism; and he openly avows his hostility to "the ceded and assumed powers of leaders and stewards." Was such a writer likely to overstate the powers he had concurred in granting?—or, did he not, after seven years experience and reflection, fully understand them? His book was generally read: was it ever intimated, that this "*Careful Observer*" had misinterpreted the Concessions of 1797? We understand these Concessions precisely as he did; as they have often been explained to us by the old preachers; some of whom yet live, and who will not, and dare not, attest your new interpretation to be the correct one! and, therefore, several of these old men either withdrew, or voted against you, whilst others, though present, voted not at all, in the Leeds case, at the last Conference! We understood these Concessions as they were undoubtedly understood, both by preachers and people, until your party began their efforts to explain them away; and until you invented your novel counter-checks to overturn them. The present controversy, therefore, differs from all former controversies on the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism in this;—that whereas, in all former disputes, the complainants have proceeded to demand a reform, or proposed alterations in that Constitution; but, in the present case, we demand *nothing new*; we propose *no alteration*; we seek *no reform*! but, appealing to the Constitution as laid down in 1797, we boldly and confidently charge the Methodist Conference (we mean your party,) with direct breaches of faith and treaty, and with open and shameful violations of that Constitution. You stand accused before the Methodist public and the world. A false delicacy alone would prevent our adding, you stand convicted!

XVII. It remains, that we take a brief notice of some of your verbal criticisms on the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797. This task, indeed, is now become wholly unnecessary, as far as the main question between the Conference and the local presbyteries is concerned; for, having already shown, that these Miscellaneous Regulations are no part of the Constitution, as settled by treaty, between the Conference and the delegates of that year, and that they were never understood as relating to the people, it matters but little what construction you may choose to put upon them.

Your verbal criticisms, indeed, can scarcely be deemed an attempt to shake our construction of such of the Miscellaneous Regulations as fell under our review, in the Address of this Circuit to the Conference. As we have already remarked, you pick out certain detached phrases from these rules, and annex some parenthetical exposition or gloss of your own; but which remains wholly unsupported by either authority or argument! Take for example, your exposition of the first of the Miscellaneous Regulations. We copy the passage, so far as concerns our argument, verbatim; giving the selected passages from the rules in *italics*, and your glosses in the ordinary type.

“One of the provisions which follows, is that I have already adverted to, which empowers the President, ‘*when written to by any concerned,*’ preachers or people, ‘*to visit any circuit, and to inquire into their affairs with reference to Methodism,*’ a very general subject of inquiry; ‘*and in union with the district committee, redress any grievance,*’ which must, of course, include all the evils that may be complained of, and which ordinary means were found inadequate to redress, whether the cause of the evil were a preacher or a local officer.” Watson, p. 22.

Here is assertion enough, and all to be thus taken as “OF COURSE!” But there is no proof—no argument! And do you think, Sir, that this interpolation of the rule, with your mere exclamations and glosses, will be taken by any man possessed of ordinary sense, for an answer to the current argument of the London South Address; and particularly, to the general summary of that argument on this very rule, given at p. 20 of that Address? We think, no man, capable of reading this controversy, can be so weak. Answer from us is, therefore, quite unnecessary. Besides, we owe something to ourselves. There is a point, below the level of which we cannot condescend. We therefore simply refer the reader back again to the London South Address. We have there fully and unanswerably proved, that this rule relates exclusively to the disturbance of a circuit by a travelling preacher. The inquiry is intended to ascertain the nature and degree of such preacher’s misconduct and imprudence; as well as to point out the par-

ticular redress, which the circuit may be entitled to claim, from the President and the District Meeting. It is proper, however, to meet here a charge which, towards the close of your pamphlet, you perpetually throw out against our method of quoting the Miscellaneous Regulations, in our Address to the Conference. In that Address we never professed to give all the rules relating to district meetings; nor all the Miscellaneous Regulations; and for this plain reason, they were *miscellaneous*; and several of them, therefore, had no relation to our subject. Our business was, not with district meetings *in general*, but with *special* district meetings; and particularly, with the right of such meetings to interfere in the *local* affairs of circuits, where neither the conduct nor appointment of travelling preachers were concerned. Of all such rules as related to the subject we professed to give, and we have faithfully given, a true and literal copy. Those rules stand in our pages to the letter, as they stand in the Minutes of Conference.

At page 27 of your Address, you charge us with quoting the Concessions "in no very creditable manner;" and add, "the words of Conference, if your agent had fully quoted them, are, 'our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining but a *bare negative* in general.'" Let the reader now turn to page 11 of our Address to the Conference, where we profess to quote these Concessions; and, nine lines from the bottom of the page, he will find the very words "*fully*," literally, and correctly transcribed! Thus, as usual, we are falsely accused, and misrepresented! What is still worse on your part, whilst thus charging us with not quoting the passage fully, you suppress an important part of it; which, as we shall presently shew, if you had introduced, would have overturned your whole argument in this very place! We give the whole passage, every syllable and every letter;—you suppress what makes directly against your argument; and, at the same time, have the face to accuse us of dishonourable quotation!

With the exception of a note, which we shall presently introduce, all your other complaints of misquotation are either general, and refer to no particular passage, and, therefore, cannot be confronted by a direct reference to the original rules; or, like the above instance, they are positively and absolutely false! This may be thought strong language: but, we are accused of dishonourable conduct;—we therefore say, it is false! We have misquoted nothing—we have suppressed nothing—we have misrepresented nothing! Let the reader, who chooses to be at the pains, satisfy himself by comparing every rule, with which we professed to have any concern, with the original rule, in the Minutes of Conference; and, if he can

detect the omission or variation of a word or a syllable, he will do what we have not been able to do, after the most careful and exact examination!

We now introduce an admirable specimen at once of the *spirit*, and the *integrity*, of the party against whose usurpations we have ventured to raise our voice. We say, of the *party*, because, although you are the author, the slander has been fully adopted and re-echoed in the Methodist Magazine; or rather, in what was once the Methodist Magazine, but is now the perverted organ and engine of your party. It is as follows:

“This intermediate rule is artfully left out, by the writer of the Address, for the sake of a dishonourable quirk. He would thus the more plausibly interpret the third of these Regulations by the first; but even this does not serve his turn, for he is obliged to leave out a part even of the first!” Watson, p. 28. Note.

The charge brought against us in this “*affectionate*” note is two-fold; *first*, that we have omitted a part of the first of the Miscellaneous Regulations, relating to districts; and, *secondly*, that we have wholly left out the third of these Regulations.

1. To the first of these charges we have none other reply to offer, than that already given,—it is false! What more can we say? The original Regulation stands in the Minutes of Conference for 1797, vol. i. p. 378. It is transcribed in our Address, p. 12. Not a word, not a syllable, not a letter, is either omitted or altered! The copy is literal, faithful, and correct! Will the reader believe this? Let him examine for himself. But the Methodist Connexion is not yet aware how far a preacher of your party (God forbid that we should be thought to speak here of Methodist preachers in general) will go, in order to traduce and vilify an opponent, whom they cannot otherwise answer!

2. As to the second charge, that we have wholly omitted the third of these Miscellaneous Regulations, “for the sake of a dishonourable quirk;” we reply, that we have omitted several of these Regulations for the very same “quirk;” or rather, for a very good and sufficient reason, viz. that they have no bearing on the question, and are not calculated to throw any light upon it! You were fully aware of this; and, therefore, whilst thus abusing us, you carefully, though most disingenuously, abstain, *in this place*, from quoting the rule, for its production would have put you out of countenance! You therefore content yourself with telling us, that “it is a provision made expressly for cases of a specially ‘critical’ and ‘extraordinary’ nature!” We must now produce it for you. In the Minutes of Conference it stands thus:—



“The chairman of each district, in conjunction with his brethren of the Committee, shall be responsible to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his district is concerned.”—Minutes, 1797, vol. i. p. 379.

Thus the simple production of the rule is an answer to your complaint; for the question between us is, whether districts are at all “concerned” in *local* affairs, except as regards travelling preachers: and, as the Regulation limits the responsibility of the chairman to extend only “*so far as his district is concerned*,” it is clear that our question must be first decided, before this Regulation can have any bearing on the subject! You cannot pretend that there is any thing in this rule to throw any light on the question; or to determine whether districts are or are, not, concerned in local affairs. And can any absurdity be greater than to suppose, that the Conference should make the chairman and preachers of the district responsible for the “execution of the laws” in our local meetings, of which they are not members, and at which they have no right to be present? Who ever heard that the chairman of the district and his brethren were members of, and had a right to sit in, a leaders’ meeting?

But this is not all. You are particularly unfortunate whenever you appeal to the laws in support of your newly assumed powers! The Conference, twice alarmed by these assemblies of lay delegates, were most anxious to prevent any future occasion for such assemblies. This could only be done by compelling the preachers faithfully to observe the treaties which had been made with those of 1795 and 1797. Hence this great anxiety in the Conference to have the laws executed! And this anxiety continued for some years, until this dread of the lay delegates, in some measure, wore off. Thus we find, that it was not only the Conference of 1797, but several successive Conferences, that enforced on the districts the observance of the laws; and no rule of interpretation can be more fair and just, than to compare these several and successive injunctions, thus enforced from year to year. By this means we shall ascertain precisely what those laws were, which the Conference were so anxious to have executed, and who were the apprehended delinquents. We select the following instances from the Minutes.

1798.—“Q. Can any amendment be made in our yearly district meetings?”

“A. Yes: in the examination of characters, not only morality and religion, in a general sense, should be kept in view, but a particular inquiry must be made, whether our rules, as set forth in the large Minutes, are observed by each individual in every station.” Min. of Conf. vol. i. p. 416.

1799.—“Q. It has been required by our Minutes, that the characters and conduct of the preachers, in respect to their fulfilment of the rules, to which they have subscribed, should

"be particularly inquired into in the district meetings;—have  
"the district committees complied with this?"

"A. Not so fully, we fear, as they should, in general. But  
"we insist that in future all district committees shall be exact  
"in fulfilling their duty in this respect." Minutes of Conference,  
vol. ii. p. 26.

From the above extracts it is clear, 1. That the laws, the execution of which is thus enforced on district meetings, are those to which the preachers had "subscribed;" that is, the Concessions and Code of Laws, solemnly signed by the 145 preachers in 1797, for securing the newly ceded rights of the local meetings, against the encroachments of ministerial power! Were any other laws of Conference so signed? Were the Miscellaneous Regulations thus subscribed? 2. That the parties, against whose violations these provisions are made, were travelling preachers, "*in every station*," and the "*particular inquiry*" directed by these Regulations, is into THEIR conduct, in respect to THEIR fulfilment of those rules. 3. That on this account, therefore, these strict injunctions are laid upon the chairman and committees of districts; because, as travelling preachers, the apprehended delinquents are subject to their jurisdiction! The necessary consequence of all this is, that every one of your arguments, in favour of a right of interference in *local* affairs by special district meetings, derived from this injunction, "to execute the laws," falls to the ground! Instead of omitting this regulation, "for the sake of a dishonourable quirk," and "to serve a turn," our turn is thus evidently served by its production! It is altogether in favour of our construction, and was intended by the Conference of 1797, as an additional guarantee and security of our rights and privileges against your encroachments, if you had the good faith to execute it! Thus the "quirks" and "turns" are eminently your own; and you have, doubtless, earned to yourself, by this display of ingenuity, a renown which can only perish with your name!

The *fourth* of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, relating to districts, we had also omitted in our Address to the Conference. This Regulation is so manifestly foreign to our question, that you do not indeed accuse us of omitting it "for the sake of a dishonourable quirk;" but you, nevertheless, drag it in, as an illustration of a general right of interference, even with quarterly meetings! It is as follows:—

"The Conference recommends it to the superintendants of circuits; to invite, on all important occasions, the chairmen of their respective districts to be present at their quarterly meetings." Minutes of Conference, vol. i. p. 379.

We notice this "attempt," as a very fair specimen of your method of construing the rules of Conference, and working out your "inherent rights." Having simply quoted this recommendation, "to invite the chairman to be present;" you

add, "and thus to interfere officially, by advice and influence, in the local affairs of circuits!" Thus, by a gloss entirely your own, and wholly unsupported, an *invitation "to be present,"* is unceremoniously converted into a *right "to interfere officially!"* Still this can only apply to a chairman; yet, in eight lines more, which you expend in abusing us, this chairman, by another "*turn,*" swells into "the Methodist Conference or any district meeting!" And the right of these interlopers "to interfere officially," is made out from this mere recommendation, "to invite the chairman" to be present at a quarterly meeting!!! This is getting on pretty fast; but pray, Sir, pause one moment, and reflect,

1. That no right whatever is here vested in the chairman, for it is implied, that he cannot enter a quarterly meeting on his own authority, but must wait for an invitation.

2. That the Conference, having just entered into a solemn covenant with our fathers in 1797, could have no right after that to alter the constitution of our quarterly meetings; and to strengthen its own influence in such meetings, by the introduction of new *official* representatives. The only representatives of the Conference, which we acknowledge in quarterly meetings, are the travelling preachers of the circuit. The Conference of 1797 were fully aware of this; and, therefore, they venture here on a mere "recommendation." It is not a rule; for such a rule the Conference, on Mr. VEVERS's principle, had no power to make; and no right can flow from a recommendation!

3. Much less has the superintendant a right to alter the constitution of our quarterly meetings, by the introduction of new official characters. Whether, therefore, he can comply with this recommendation, "to invite the chairman," must depend upon whether he can obtain leave so to do from the quarterly meetings!

4. And, that there is some difference between "an invitation to be present," and a "right to interfere officially," is proved by recent practice in the London circuits. With a view to preserve a kind and affectionate feeling between the circuits, it was usual "to invite" the preachers of all the London circuits, "to be present" at all the quarterly meetings of the several circuits. These brethren came and dined with us; and we rejoiced to see them. But it was at length found, that they brought with them rather too much of *l'esprit du corps*; and that it was impossible to prevent them from "interfering" in our discussions, which were thereby subjected to undue influence. Members of the quarterly meeting complained, that they were borne down by a phalanx of preachers! We were, therefore, under the necessity of withdrawing these invitations, after some warm discussions; and simply, because these kind friends, like yourself, Sir, could not be made to

understand the distinction, between "an invitation to be present," and a right to "interfere officially" in our affairs!

5. Your gloss is directly in the teeth of the rule of 1792, which declares, that the chairman "must never individually *interfere* with any other circuit than his own." This rule was republished by the Conference of 1797, and proves that they understood the difference between an "invitation to be present," and a right "to interfere officially."

Another case, in which you think we are "manifestly perplexed," (that is, which you have laboured hard to perplex,) affords us no perplexity at all! It arises out of another of these Miscellaneous Regulations, by which, "in cases which, in the judgment of the chairman, cannot be settled in the *ordinary* district meeting, the 'power' of the district is to be increased by the addition of three superintendants; [why did you omit here the words, three "*of the nearest*" superintendants? was this a sore spot in the Leeds case?] and the district, thus constituted, is to settle every thing until the Conference. This 'settling every thing,' you tell us, means settling matters of charge and accusation against preachers only; but allows of no interference with 'local jurisdictions.'" Watson, page 27. And pray, Sir, what is there in the rule, or in any thing you have said upon it, to the contrary? May not an *extraordinary* case arise of the disturbance of a circuit, by the folly or misconduct of a travelling preacher? Had not many such cases arisen previous to 1797? Was it not in relation to the Bristol case, in which preachers of the first consideration and influence in the Connexion headed the several contending parties, that this very rule was framed? And have no such cases happened since that period? You admit, that our interpretation is correct, as far as it goes; but you wish to extend it to the people. There is nothing in the language of the rule to countenance or justify such extension of its application; and it would be contrary to what we have abundantly proved to be the true object and design of all these Miscellaneous Regulations, relating to districts. The rule, as we apply it, is proper and necessary. Suppose some leviathan of your party to be arraigned before a district meeting, for attempting some of your new schemes against the liberties of the church; might not the chairman, knowing the influence and strength of this party, justly conceive, that the district committee required to be strengthened, under this rule, by calling in, if he could find them, three neighbouring superintendants, not of the party? But these Regulations, formed for the protection of the people, are losing all their value by the overgrown influence of your party, which renders it impossible to have them honestly executed! Thus, in the Leeds case, instead of putting Mr. Grindrod on his trial for his illegal conduct in suspending Mr. M. Johnson, in opposition to

the judgment and verdict of his brethren, which was their proper business; the Special District Meeting suffered the real delinquent to escape, and taking part with him, they could find no redress of grievances for the people, but in anathemas and expulsion! And why do you play upon the words, "settling every thing?" Do these words really relate to every dispute, charge, or case, which may arise in the Connexion, so as to give you universal dominion; or do they obviously, and beyond dispute, extend to nothing more than "every thing" relating to that particular case, to "settle" which, the three superintendants are called in? Nothing can be more absurd, than your reasonings on this very rule; we might go on to expose them, as in other cases we have done; but it is enough! The language of these Miscellaneous Regulations, when taken in connection with their evident design and object, is sufficiently clear and explicit. With the people, the Conference of 1797 had already treated; their rights were defined and settled by "the Concessions and Code of Laws;" and, having finished this treaty, the delegates broke up, and returned home. The Conference, however, had another party to deal with; viz., the preachers, whose conduct in the circuits had occasioned all these troubles.—In relation to them the Miscellaneous Regulations were framed. These Regulations very properly require, that, whenever a circuit is thus disturbed, the President shall visit such circuit, and inquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and an inquiry which is necessary, not only to ascertain whether the preacher be to blame, but also the nature and extent of his misconduct or imprudence. The President is then, "in conjunction with the district meeting, to redress any grievance, and to settle every thing till the Conference," which alone has the power finally to deal with the accused preacher. Can any thing be more natural and proper than this provision? "Aye! but," quoth you, "here are *affairs*, and *grievances*, and *inquiry*, and *authority to settle every thing* mentioned in the rules!" and, abandoning the whole scope and design of the rules, you pick out and detach these delightful terms and phrases, and applying them generally, you put the whole Connexion under the ban of special district meetings, because, forsooth, they are to inquire into and redress the grievances, inflicted on the circuits by imprudent or turbulent preachers, during the intervals of Conference! We have already told you that, in this way, any thing that it entereth into the mind of man to conceive, may be readily proved from either Bible or Minutes!

It is thus, Sir, that you reply throughout to all our arguments on the construction of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797! We should be ashamed to follow you any further; it could answer no end in fixing their true meaning and signification, which is already more than accomplished; and could only lead us to a further exposure of your "paltry sophis-



tries," "dishonest attempts," and "artful and designing leadings," (we employ your own *affectionate* terms,) of which we believe the public as well as ourselves will have had a surfeit! We lament, indeed, the effects of such principles and such conduct, as your book exhibits, on a class of young preachers, who ought now to be rising into eminence and usefulness in the Connexion; but the foundation of whose ruin will be surely laid, in their imbibing this *mania* about inherent rights and ministerial rule! Thus, a junior preacher, lately advanced to a superintendancy, sporting in wonderful *naivete* with the inadvertencies of a letter, which appears to have been irregularly published at Liverpool, comes forward, as a redoubtable champion at your heels; and tells his readers, "in proving that it [the London South Address] is essentially false in the statement from which its wonderful reasoning is projected, I was steady to my purpose!" We have a kind feeling towards this young man; and, therefore, we spare his follies, and suffer in him these absurdities to pass! but we advise him to seek a better model than can be found in your party, and to follow those only who follow Christ. Those ministers who imitate Christ and his Apostles, in love to the church, are sure to gain the affections of the people. This is the only legitimate source of ministerial authority! He who rules by love, will never want the power to do good to the bodies and souls of men;—the only power which a Christian minister can lawfully claim!

We have repeatedly called for some instances, like that at Leeds, of special district meetings interfering to remodel and test leaders' meetings, and to try local officers and members. Throughout the whole controversy on this case, however, no example of a similar case has been adduced. You have, indeed, at page 16, mentioned a long journey imposed upon you, to hold a special district meeting, under the rule of 1797; and, from your telling us that the men who called you to this task, "had not then discovered, that a circuit had an inviolable independency within itself;" as well as from your suppressing all particulars, you would evidently convey to us that the cases were parallel! This, Sir, is bad, very bad! The facts of that case are now before us; we would have entered into them, but they have already been partially laid before the public. Suffice it, then, to say, the charge there was brought by the people against the superintendant! It was, therefore, any thing but a case in point! It was a case in which the interference of a special district meeting is admitted and contended for, in our Address to the Conference! What are the public to think of the suppression of this fact? And this is the only case you can adduce in support of your novel construction of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797!

XVIII. Wearied with sifting all this empty chaff, and dis-

gusted with these attempts to pervert the plain sense and meaning of the Miscellaneous Regulations of 1797, the reader will naturally be anxious to know, what you intend to make of the direct Concessions of 1797; and how you will interpret the very large and liberal sacrifices in respect to authority, made by these Concessions to the local presbyteries? If you will persist in your novel and interested interpretation of these Miscellaneous Regulations, it becomes your duty to reconcile that interpretation with the solemn treaty made with our fathers; and to tell us what that authority was which was given up, in relation to district meetings, in 1797. But here you are greatly at a loss! In a pamphlet of thirty-one pages only, it is not until you reach the twenty-seventh that you venture even to touch on a point, which forms the most important and decisive obstruction to your novel claims! And when, at last, we expect you are coming to the point, we find scarcely half a dozen lines of mingled assertion and abuse, before you fly off from the subject without attempting either argument or proof! We do not recollect to have seen, in any writer, a more miserable attempt to bolt on one side, and avoid an awkward question! "Speaking of their Concessions, they (the Conference) say, 'our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining.' But he has quoted them in no very creditable manner; for the 'authority' spoken of is not the authority of the districts in matters of discipline, for the same Minutes make the districts responsible 'for the execution of the laws,' [here, whilst complaining of our quotation, you suppress the words, 'as far as his district is concerned,' which, as we have already shewn p. 97, completely negative this assertion,] but it is their authority in *financial* matters, and in them only; for the words of Conference, if your agent had fully quoted them, are, 'Our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining, but a *bare negative* in general.'" Watson, p. 27.

After what we have already said, it can scarcely be necessary to inform the reader, that this charge of mutilated quotation is, like all the rest of these charges, a positive falsehood! Let him turn to page 11 of our Address to the Conference; and, towards the bottom of the page, he will find the whole passage literally and correctly transcribed, from the Minutes of Conference! But here again, Sir, whilst thus unrighteously accusing us, you suppress another part of the Concession, which overturns your position entirely; for it is immediately added, "but a bare negative in general, *and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up the rough draught of the stations.*" This is certainly not a "*financial*" matter; and proves, therefore, that the authority of districts, thus given up in 1797, was not limited to such matters, and "to them ONLY!" And so conscious

were you of this, that this last clause of the Concession is not to be found in any part of your Address; you have suppressed it altogether!

That the "sacrifices in respect to authority made on behalf of the whole body of travelling preachers," and of district meetings in particular; and of which sacrifices the Conference of 1797 make so great a merit, related "to their authority in *financial* matters, and in them ONLY," is as far from the truth, as those other bold and hazardous assertions, by which you painfully strive to uphold a bad cause! This will appear from the following considerations, several of which it was impossible that you should have overlooked.

1. That the CONCESSIONS of 1797 are, as we have already remarked, arranged under distinct heads. The first *head* is thus intitled, "I. In respect to finances or money matters." Under this head it is provided, that "all bills, &c. shall first meet with the approbation of the quarterly meeting, and be signed by the general steward of the circuit, before they can be brought to the district committee." Thus in *financial* matters the authority of the district is reduced to a "*bare negative*." But the second head of the Concessions is intitled, "II. In respect to all OTHER temporal matters," evidently in *contradistinction* to, and *exclusively* of, "*financial* matters," which were already disposed of under the first head. Now here, again, the very same restriction is repeated; and the authority of the district is thereby again reduced, in these OTHER matters also, to a "*bare negative in general*." From this simple statement, to go no further, your assertion falls to the ground, that the authority spoken of as thus given up, "is their authority in *financial* matters, and in them ONLY."

2. Having stated the direct Concessions, the Conference of 1797 add a summary of them, under six general divisions, as relating not merely to "*financial*" and "*other temporal concerns*," (in relation to which they distinctly and specifically declare, that the "district meetings have nothing left them but a negative,") but also to "the admission and expulsion of members;—the appointment and removal of local officers," &c. This summary being completed, the Conference proceed to state, in a concluding paragraph, what they conceived to be the general effect of these Concessions; and particularly in relation to district meetings. "We may," say they, "taking ALL THESE THINGS into our view, [is it not unaccountable effrontery, when the Conference say "*all these things*," to contradict the direct Concessions, by excepting what had just been expressly conceded,—the right of *admitting* and *expelling* members, and *trying local officers*?] truly say, that such have been the sacrifices we have made, that our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining, but

a bare negative in general; [thus repeating this phrase in the general summary which they had before specifically applied to "financial matters,"] and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up the rough draft of the stations of the preachers." Is there one word here that limits the authority, thus given up, *exclusively* to matters of finance? Is it not manifestly given up in relation to "*all these things*" previously enumerated? The exceptions are stated, and they harmonize with the true construction. On what authority do you presume to add to their number, by excepting "matters of discipline"?

3. That this surrender by the Conference of the "authority" of district committees, did not relate to matters of "*finance*, and to them *only*," is put beyond all question and controversy, by the nature of that particular exception, which, in every instance, you have carefully and studiously suppressed; and which, as we have already remarked, is not to be found in any part of your book! It is a fundamental rule of logic, as laid down by all the great masters of the art, that "*Exceptio probat regulam de rebus non exceptis*,"—the exception proves the rule with regard to the thing ruled." In other words, you cannot except out of a grant or concession what was not contained in it. The thing excepted, must be of the same nature, kind, or quality, with the thing granted. The thing granted is thus expressed by the Conference, "Our district committees have hardly any *authority* remaining;" and, in another place, "have *nothing* left them." The exceptions are, "but a bare negative in general; and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up the rough draft of the stations." Now, granting that the "bare negative" related to "matters of finance;" yet, if the authority of districts thus conceded were "their authority in matters of finance, *and in them ONLY*," how could the right of appointing a representative, to assist in drawing up a rough draft of the stations, be excepted out of such a grant? This single rule knocks down all your attempts to limit these large and liberal "sacrifices in respect to authority," to "matters of finance *ONLY*;" and, with all who value reason and common sense, will settle the question for ever, in favour of that genuine construction, which we, and the "Careful Observer" of 1824, have so fully established.

4. Your assertion, that it was the authority of district committees in "matters of *finance*, and in them *only*," that was given up in 1797, is contradicted on every hand. It does not harmonize with the other Concessions, contained in the same treaty. If the Conference could not surrender what you so fondly term, "the *inherent* rights of ministers and pastors," those rights must undoubtedly have been stronger in a superintendant, who has a direct charge in relation to the

flock, than in any district meeting, which, in its collective capacity, can have no such relation, but through the superintendant. How, then, could the Conference surrender into the hands of the local authorities, "by far the greatest part of the superintendant's authority," in all the various matters of DISCIPLINE enumerated under the several heads of the Concessions? Here you have the confidence to tell us, that the Conference could not, and did not, surrender a particle of this authority; but merely granted "certain checks upon its exercise!" But this is a gratuitous contradiction and falsification of the very language of the Concessions! The words of the Conference of 1797 are, "we have given up to you by far the greatest part of the superintendant's *authority*." You cannot endure this; and yet, unable to explain it away, (for the language is too clear and express to admit of that,) you press to the issues of a desperate cause by a flat negation of the conceded right! This is desperation indeed! It sets, not only reason, but honour and conscience at defiance! Again: if we have really no ministry but that of travelling preachers;---if all our discipline belongs to them *exclusively*, as of *inherent* right; what becomes of the great "sacrifices in respect to *authority*, on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers," made by this Conference? Are all these matters, notwithstanding the express language of the Concessions, to be interpreted as belonging to "matters of finance, and to them *only*?" Truly, Sir, you are very much out of your place as a Methodist preacher with such notions as these! One would really imagine that your sole object, in running to this extreme, was to purge yourself from the old leaven imbibed in the New Connexion! But away with this folly! There were certain preachers in 1795 and 1797, who, like the men of your party in the present day, began to push the powers of districts beyond the just boundary. They assumed as against the people, what, as we have shown in our Address to the Conference, had only been granted to them as against travelling preachers; and, arrogating to themselves supreme authority over the local jurisdictions, they roused the Connexion to a determined stand against their encroachments! This is matter of fact and history.\* An appeal to the pamphlets published

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\* The preachers of that day, as in the present, contended for the necessity of this power, in *local* affairs, on the same ground on which district meetings had been originally introduced in relation to the preachers, viz. as a substitute for Mr. Wesley's authority. This argument was met by a demand, on the part of the people, that lay delegates should be incorporated with the district committee; and this was a main principle in the plan of executive government submitted by the delegates of 1797 to the Conference. The Conference of 1797, rather than admit the delegates, into either Conference or district meeting, gave up the power of districts, thus newly claimed. We think, no impartial man can read the Controversy and Concessions of 1797, without coming to this conclusion. The old preachers, immediately concerned in framing the Concessions, know it to be the fact, that all the pamphlets



prior to the Conference of 1797, will abundantly prove, that the reform of districts was one main and general object with our fathers. You admit, that the Conference made some Concessions as to *financial* matters, (which does not appear to have been at all a *special* ground of complaint against the district meetings,) but, as to what was the real cause of complaint, their interference in matters of discipline, you think the Conference answered the men of 1797, by enacting the Miscellaneous Regulations; that is, according to your interpretation, by doubling the powers complained of! You thus make the Conference answer the delegates, as Rehoboam replied to the men of Israel; "My father chastized you with whips, but I will chastize you with scorpions!" 1 Kings xii. 14. And we are to believe, that the delegates of 1797 rose up, and thanked the Conference for all this kind consideration, and for their very liberal Concessions!

But you add, "If the authority there spoken of, as given up, were the authority of interfering with your local discipline, you yourselves acknowledge that the Conference have retained at least 'a bare negative' upon your proceedings, which is no small degree of interference." Watson, page 27. Thus, 'a bare negative' is no small positive! The reservation, moreover, is to the district meeting, and not to the Conference: why change the terms? We have told you, Sir, that this expression occurs as a repetition in a *general summary* of what had been previously *specifically* applied to matters of finance, and other temporal matters. But, if you will have it, that the negative applies to discipline, some of those *other* matters related to the superintendant's authority, and not at all to districts. Was the superintendant's authority then reduced to "a bare negative?" We frankly admit, however, that a negative is reserved to districts in such matters as, by the established usage of Methodism, come ordinarily before the district. The declared object of these Concessions is, to *reduce* the power both of superintendants and of district meetings; and it would surpass, we presume, even your ingenuity, to found on these Concessions *an extension* of their authority. There are matters of *finance* as well as of *discipline*, with which district meetings never pretended to have any concern; such are the accounts and matters *ordinarily* transacted at leaders' meetings and quarterly meetings: and there are similar matters, with which district meetings are properly and Methodistically concerned; such are the accounts of deficiencies, &c., passed through them to the Conference; the calling out of

and resolutions, on the part of the people, insisted on this point, viz. the admission of lay delegates. And that the point was given up, only in consideration of "the great sacrifices in respect to authority," made by the Conference, "on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers," and of the district meetings in particular. We have not space for quotations from these pamphlets, but the notice contained in the Miscellaneous Regulations themselves, respecting delegates, is sufficient evidence that this point was urged.

young men to travel; and, in general, whatever is of direct and permanent interest beyond the precincts of the circuit. In all these matters, and even down to the erection of organs, or any other affair, in which the consent of the Conference is required, we have never denied, but fully and freely admit, that the district meetings have *a negative*. We do not wish to impair the authority of district meetings, or to lower it beyond the point to which it was reduced in 1797; but we wish to keep to that point! It is, however, a waste of time and words to argue such a question with one, who suppresses all his knowledge and experience of Methodism, in order to perplex and confound what to him must be perfectly plain; and who raises the point only that it may serve as a vehicle of personal abuse and misrepresentation!

XIX. The firm and decided steps taken by this circuit, to maintain, within its own borders at least, the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, you have thought proper to stigmatize as the setting up of Independency! To the unthinking and the ignorant, words, until explained, are sometimes terrible *bugbears*! We, however, are not children, to be frightened at so harmless a word. What, we pray you, Sir, do you mean by Independency? Dr. Coke, in 1794, declared, that the Conference was the most perfect aristocracy existing perhaps upon earth! The Doctor did not think this state of things was exactly as it ought to be; and our fathers, in 1795 and 1797, positively refused to submit to it. They felt that, even in Methodism, they had rights; and rights worth preserving to themselves and to their children. They, therefore, stood up in defence of those rights; and compelled the Conference to acknowledge them. Now, Sir, Methodism, under this change, did not become Independency; that is, its several circuits and societies did not become Independent churches; nor did they assume a popular form of church government, in the strict sense of the term.\* But she brake from off her

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\* The writer of the review of Mr. Leach's pamphlet, in the Methodist Magazine for May last, has not only retailed all your misrepresentations with increase, but he has poured forth a torrent of invective and abuse, which reminds us of Pope's description of

"The king of dykes, than whom no sluice of mud  
With deeper sable blots the silver flood!"—DUNCIAD.

We should hardly stoop to notice such a writer, were it not for the purpose of freeing the minds of some of our friends from one or two of his misrepresentations, which have been industriously circulated. We therefore quote the following passages:—

"Mr. Watson, in his Address to the Southwark Dissentients, had shown [vainly attempted to show] that the principles contained in the Address and Resolutions, which they had published, were those of Independency; and Mr. Leach, whose pamphlet has been taken up by some of that party, as *their* reply to Mr. Watson, avows this openly." Here is a complete overreach; an attempt to reach us through Mr. Leach, with whom, or with

neck the yoke of an absolute government; elevated her local presbyteries to a station and condition which should command respect; and acknowledged, as vested in her local jurisdictions,

whose pamphlet, we have certainly no connexion. It is, moreover, quite a gratuitous and unsupported statement. None of our "party" ever did take up Mr. Leach's pamphlet as their Reply to your Address. Our friends understood the question, raised by the London South Circuit, better than this; and intended, on the approach of the ensuing Conference, to give the present Reply, in which we maintain our own ground, and hold you to the Leeds case, and to the law of Methodism. But having thus hooked Mr. Leach and the London South Circuit together, for the convenience of vilifying both together, this "man of conscience" goes *cantering* on:—"Thus those of the Dissentients, who go along with him in these views, have brought the case to this,—they no longer contend for what they think to be *old* in Methodism, against what they condemn as modern; they give up all attempts to prove that the Constitution of 1797 has been violated; they abandon all their efforts to show, from its own Minutes, that the Conference is in error,—thus, at length, we get into open day!" How happy would this writer have been if, whilst penning the above and similar passages, he could have persuaded himself that there was a particle of truth in them, in relation to those whom he calls the "Southwark Dissentients!" How happy would you and your party be, to bury all recollection of the Leeds case, and of your own misdoings, in a stormy discussion about popular rights, democracy, and Independent forms of church government! This, to you, would indeed be getting into open day, compared with the darkness which now surrounds you!

To Mr. Leach we must leave the defence of his own principles and views. With all the learning and research which has been displayed in the defence of Independency, by some of the best and greatest men that have ever lived, on his side, he can have little to fear from such a writer as this reviewer, who appears to know just as much of the Scriptures, as enables him to pervert and misapply them! We have never seen such wretched and perverse attempts at criticism in any work professing orthodox and evangelical sentiments! But with Mr. Leach, we regret to say, we have no connexion whatever. He was not a member of our circuit, nor present at any of our meetings. He has shared in none of our councils, nor did he write in any connexion with us. He has, moreover, like many others in various parts of the kingdom, since the facts of the Leeds case were known, in despair of seeing your party and the Conference brought back to the principles of 1797, withdrawn from the Connexion—a step which we lament, and which it is our most anxious wish to prevent any of our members from taking.

Another slander of this reviewer we shall briefly notice. It is the charge which you first preferred in print, that "many worthy persons had been *artfully* prevailed upon to sign" the Resolutions of the 23d September last. These Resolutions were read, and partially signed, at the Quarterly Meeting, where they were received with the most decided approbation. They were afterwards handed about for signature. We believe no one signed them without due attention to their import. Some, who wished time for consideration, retained them a considerable time. The following fact, however, will abundantly prove, that every individual must have signed them upon full conviction of their propriety. A fortnight after the Quarterly Meeting, and long after most of the signatures had been obtained, a meeting was called at which many of the official characters in the circuit attended. No one appeared to know for what object, or by whose authority, this meeting was called. At the time appointed, however, the superintendant appeared and took the chair. He admitted that the meeting had been called with his sanction. On being questioned as to its object, he frankly stated, that he had understood some individuals had signed the Resolutions, who wished then to retract their signatures. It was, of

certain powers and prerogatives, in the exercise of which they became so far Independent, as, that neither Conference nor district meeting can lawfully interfere to coerce or overrule them. These powers, rights, and privileges, are set forth in the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797. So far as they go, we set up and maintain the Independency of this circuit. But we claim no further or other Independency. The general and undefined charge of Independency, which you prefer, is evidently designed to raise a prejudice against us, as though we wished to burst asunder the bands of the Connexion; and it is, therefore, to be classed amongst those other slanderous insinuations, as unfounded as they are ungenerous, by which, in your extremity, you would misrepresent and discredit a righteous cause! Look at the Methodism of the London South Circuit, Sir, for several years past; and tell us whether you are honest in representing us as "aiming at Independency?" In our Address to the Conference, page 5, we declared that we were content and satisfied with the system thus established in this circuit. Does it differ in any material respect from the Methodism of every other circuit? We admit the right of the Conference to appoint preachers to all our chapels: is that Independency? We admit all the Methodistical rights of the superintendant, the same as in the other circuits; particularly his right to preside in all our local meetings; to nominate all our officers, subject to the election of the local authorities; and to regulate, according to usage, all our religious services: is all this Independency? We admit all the established rights and ordinary powers of the Conference and of district meetings: will Independency admit any of these things? In short, Sir, have we altered, or attempted to alter, any thing relating to Methodism in this circuit? You know that we have not! You know that we oppose nothing, and object to nothing, except your novel and interested constructions of Methodistical law, your bold and unjustifiable re-assumption of absolute power, and your newly invented counter-checks, by which you seek to undermine and destroy the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797.

Although it were impossible to expose all the sophistries and course, immediately offered to strike off the name of any individual who should request it. This offer was frequently repeated, and individuals were called on even by name. But although most of the requisitionists were present, no individual would retract his signature. It appeared that the superintendant had been imposed on by this statement. However, the meeting, thus called, was speedily converted into an attack upon the Resolutions themselves, and which, consequently, underwent another long and severe discussion, which lasted until nearly midnight. The result was, that so far from any individual retracting, or wishing to retract, his signature, we gained many several additional signatures! Will the writer of this review pretend that he did not know all these facts? Were not the Editor of the Magazine and the London preachers acquainted with them? After this statement, what can your party hope to gain by these slanderous charges?



absurdities of your book; and notwithstanding our reluctance to enter into your speculative questions, has induced us to pass over many of them; yet we are constrained to notice the strange inconsistencies and deceptive reasonings, on which you have founded this charge of Independency. We therefore quote a few passages.

"The religious body to which we belong is a **CONNEXION**; that is, a number of societies who have agreed to unite themselves in a *common bond* of doctrine and discipline, under a *common code* of regulations and usages, and under a **COMMON GOVERNMENT**. Our societies are not **INDEPENDENT** churches." Watson, page 4.

Now, Sir, if, as regards the present controversy, this be not talking and saying nothing, it is something like it! Every government is *common* to those who live under it. By the common government, you evidently mean the supreme and *absolute* government of the Conference, of which you say, "As a Connexion we look up to it, as the *common* governing body, to which all are subject." Pages 10, 11. This word *absolute* was not convenient; it was better to talk indefinitely about a *common* government! But the question is, whether the Conference be an *absolute* government? Whether it were so, or not, anterior to 1797, it has not been so since that period. Englishmen are not partial to absolute governments; and, therefore, it was against this pretended absolute government of the Conference, that our fathers rose up in 1795 and 1797. From that time to the present, the Conference has had no more to do with the ceded rights of the local presbyteries, than the king's ministers have to do with the chartered rights of the city of London. Thus, your first and main position is false, and all the reasoning you found on it falls to the ground!

On the fact of our being a Connexion, we cannot but admire how your feather waves to the wind. In the resolutions of the last Conference we were loaded with abuse, for pretending to interfere with the affairs of another and a distant circuit, with which, it was said, we had **NO CONCERN**! And, at the close of your Address, you are again terribly afraid of our being a Connexion, and charge us with having "gone out of our own *local* jurisdiction." "You have," say you, "gone into the '*local* jurisdiction' of the Leeds circuit, and into that of mine also!" Both these charges are wholly unfounded, but no matter; they illustrate your notion. Here is a **CONNEXION**, in which the parties *connected* have **NO CONCERN** with each other! No: not even to sympathize in each others wrongs, and to assist one another in maintaining the "*common bond of doctrine and discipline, and the common code of regulations and usages*!" Being supreme and absolute, you are to exercise whatever powers, and effect whatever mischief



you please, in any circuit; and all the other circuits, though connected in these common bonds, are to be altogether passive! *connected* indeed, but not *concerned*!

The truth is, that Mr. Wesley's societies were called a CONNEXION, because of their connexion with him, and not with one another. Thus they are described in all the Chapel Deeds, as "the Society of people called Methodists, late in Connexion with the Rev. J. Wesley, deceased." Beyond the association of a few distinct societies in a circuit, they never had any connexion one with another, except through Mr. Wesley. Since his death, our CONNEXION has been with the Conference; and, therefore, you are quite right in telling us, that as a circuit we have nothing to do, either with your circuit, or with Leeds. As individuals, as men, and free men, we talk, and write, and travel, when, where, and with whomsoever we please, without asking your leave; but as a Methodist circuit, we have not interfered with any thing but what concerned us. Your President ordered certain inflammatory publications to be circulated in our circuit; and we addressed the Conference on the subject. The Conference, ruled by a faction, entrusted a man of unhappy temper to draw up certain resolutions on the subject; and he insulted, abused, and misrepresented us, in the name of the Conference! We, although compelled to charge the Conference *ostensibly* with violating the Constitution of 1797, yet, anxious to leave them a door of escape from this discreditable affair, directed our Resolutions, of the 23rd September last, chiefly against the real authors of the mischief. Then comes out the "*Affectionate Address*" of the Rev. Richard Watson: and who shall say, that so much *affection* did not demand a reply? Whether the Conference or your party can gain any thing by this system of attack and reply, it is not for us to say; but there are who think, that you would be wiser to let us alone.

But you inquire, how the leading principle in our Address and Resolutions, "which is, that leaders' meetings, &c., are local jurisdictions, into which no district meeting or Conference has the power [right] to intrude, accords with our connexion with, and subjection to, the whole body?" Our answer is short and simple: The only Independency we claim, the only principle we lay down, is derived from the fundamental laws, which form the basis of our union. This we have abundantly proved. But why do you mislead, by changing the terms of the argument? Why talk of our "connexion with, and subjection to, *the whole body*?" Was it ever pretended, that one circuit was in subjection to another, or, to all the others put together? Is it not clear, that you are contending, not for our subjection to the *whole body*, but to special district meetings and the Conference? Is it not equally clear, that, on every point, you are afraid to state

your positions in plain English, and are fain to dress them in an illusory garb?

Having been thus charged with the design of introducing Independency, and abused as contending for popular rights, we perhaps owe it to ourselves and to the Connexion to declare, that for these matters, beyond the just principle laid down in the Plan of Pacification and the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797, we have no great inclination. Had our principles and feelings harmonized with systems more popular than that of Wesleyan Methodism, we presume that the doors of the Independent churches are open to us; or we might have found ourselves at home in the New Connexion. We think, however, that it would be no advantage to Methodism, that every new convert, or awakened person, who may be just beginning to direct his attention to spiritual things, should be called to decide upon the important concerns of the church, which frequently demand the most serious deliberation of wisdom and experience. We think it sufficient, without closely examining the abstract right, that every such person should be at liberty to choose his own leader, from amongst those whom the local presbytery has appointed to that office; and that he has the means and opportunity, either through his leader or by direct communication, (as we trust every individual in Methodism has,) of bringing any and every question of importance before the leaders' meeting. Spiritual gifts, and even the qualifications necessary to serve the secular offices of the church, are not derived from the church, but from God. The church, however, must approve and judge of such gifts and qualifications. If any man is found to possess them, so long as Methodism continues what it has been, it will be his own fault if he have not the opportunity of exercising them. The church, perceiving the excellency of the power and the gift to be of God, will not be slow in appointing such a man to office. He will thus rise, by his talents and piety, to a station which ought to give him, and which, according to our view of the Methodist Constitution, does give him, a right to vote on every question affecting the interests of that society and circuit to which he belongs. We think it better, and are quite contented, that the local affairs of the circuits and societies should be managed by the local meetings, consisting of the men whom the church has selected and called to office; and in which the travelling preachers have certainly a full share of influence. But to oppose, in any cases, the right of such men; to overrule their decisions, as at Leeds; and to insult them with new tests, and the surveillance of the district police, is not to oppose democracy, but to introduce despotism! It is not, therefore, for popular rights that we contend, but for the rights of the local meetings;—of the official characters and acknowledged "Elders" of the church. The admission of your counter-

checks, would be a virtual overthrow of these local meetings. Will the respectable and influential men in Methodism submit to this? Let them say, whether they will not still prefer to manage their own affairs in their proper and lawful meetings, rather than submit to be dictated to and overruled by Special District Meetings and Conferences, in which we have neither voice nor influence, but in which your faction rides triumphant. Now if, after all, you, Sir, and the men of your party, are to stand up in our faces, and boldly assert that we want what we utterly disclaim,—that we are seeking to introduce what we would rather exclude,—the public, as well as ourselves, may, perhaps, wonder at your assurance; but cannot mistake, either the character or the motives of such attempts. We strongly suspect that it has of late been an object with your party, and particularly that it was the design of the virulent attack made on us in the Magazine for May last, to provoke our friends of this circuit to some expression of feeling, or intemperate proceeding, which might give a handle against us at the next Conference. In this way, at the last Conference, you got over the Leeds business, and obtained the vote of thanks; not by answering the direct charges made against you, but by exaggerated statements of the irregular proceedings of the Leeds brethren. You thus alarmed the Conference with the cry of faction, which you had yourselves provoked; and took advantage of proceedings, of which you were the originating cause! Our friends, in this circuit, have been on their guard against this manœuvre. They have held no irregular meetings;—they have disturbed nothing in the circuit;—and they intend to disturb nothing. They have simply replied to what has been published against them. The Conference and the Connexion are now warned of your misrepresentations. If the Conference choose again to be deceived, the public will have their eyes open. It will, therefore, be of little consequence what you may say, or what you may publish, against us. To all that you have yet put forth there are three main objections, which we shall beg leave to state.

1. In no instance have you touched the main facts of the Leeds case, or attempted to answer the charges preferred against you, by a direct appeal to the Concessions and Code of Laws of 1797. He that employs his pen in the present controversy, and omits these particulars, does but beat the air.

2. You nowhere admit, that the other circuits, throughout the Connexion, may justly apprehend that, what you did at Leeds, you might do elsewhere. You have been thanked by the Conference; and success and applause are the greatest stimulants to a repetition of that conduct by which they have been once obtained. When, therefore, you charge us with interfering, improperly, in the Leeds case, we allege in reply, this just apprehension, lest the same outrages should be com-

mitted in this circuit; and, seeing the Conference was not to be looked to any longer for security and protection, we aimed to secure ourselves by our seventh resolution of the 23rd of September last.

3. In all your high claims to power and authority, you have abundantly shown, that you do not understand the nature of those claims. The sources of power are two: law, sustained by the force of civil authority; and love. To the former, you can have no pretension. The latter alone was the foundation of all Mr. Wesley's power. Mr. Wesley, and the excellent men who laboured with him, were looked up to as men of God. The people felt and knew that they were disinterested. They wanted not *theirs*, but *them*. They were, therefore, beloved and obeyed. You confess, that you have lost, in a great measure at least, this power. If that be so, you are fallen indeed! any other kind of power you cannot have, and ought not to possess. You may argue and talk, you may misrepresent and abuse us; but no man ever obtained power over others, by merely "chopping logic!" If you can give us twenty good reasons, why we should submit to you; we can answer with twenty others, equally good, why you should submit to the church! In the meantime, and so long as this contention goes on, love cools, and, with it, your real power decreases. Human nature is not to be reasoned into bondage, nor induced to love by mere persuasion!

We advise you and your party, therefore, Sir, if you must perpetuate the present controversy, to lay aside all your idle speculations about inherent rights and ministerial power, and all this system of invective and abuse; and to apply yourselves to what you have hitherto so cautiously avoided,—the specific facts of the Leeds case, and their accordance with the express terms of the Plan of Pacification, and the Concessions of 1797. If this course be not convenient, then you had better acknowledge your errors, and satisfy the circuits that they shall no more be borne down by special district meetings.

In our Address to the Conference we showed, that the rules, anterior to 1797, relating to district meetings, empowered them only in relation to travelling preachers: but, with or without a rule, some men will grasp at power and authority. Similar attempts had, therefore, been made prior to 1797, but our fathers boldly and firmly resisted them. Many of us are the children and descendants of those worthy and excellent men. Called upon to defend the same rights, and maintain the same liberties, we have trodden in their steps. Far from seizing any "new topic of factious declamation," or "boldly assuming false premises, that we may hang upon them plausible and delusive arguments;" we have adopted the same principles, employed the same arguments, and drawn the same conclusions, and often in the very language of 1797. Our fathers were too

wise, and had too much experience, not to know, that the best of human institutions have a tendency to deacy; and that a new generation would arise, which would introduce new corruptions. They therefore carefully preserved the best pamphlets and publications of that day, and have handed them down to us, as heir-looms of family inheritance. We revere religion; we love Methodism; we abhor what we deem a perversion of both! Hence the ground of our opposition. We hope to prove ourselves worthy descendants of the men of 1795 and 1797, as far removed from faction, and from any disposition to trespass upon what you pompously term the *inherent* rights of others, as we are determined not to sacrifice the ceded rights of our local presbyteries, or to submit to the lordly domination of an aspiring faction in the priesthood!

We cannot admit, that any individual has a right to engage a great circuit in a personal controversy. We have not, therefore, thought it becoming to introduce this Reply to the quarterly meeting. We deem it quite sufficient, that those who have acted as a committee should subscribe their names, on behalf of themselves and others, who cordially agree with them in sentiment.

Southwark, July 1st., 1829.

Signed,

JOSEPH ASHTON,  
J. H. BOWLER,  
WILLIAM DALE,  
EDWARD HEWITT,  
W. HIGGS,  
C. J. JONES,  
J. SCRASE LANGRIDGE,  
RICHARD SMITH,  
JAMES SPICER,  
JOHN TURNLEY,  
ELISHA WILSON,  
W. WRATHALL.



## POSTSCRIPT.

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YOU inform us, page 6 of your Address, that "nothing new in principle has been introduced." We conceive, that all the proceedings of the Leeds Special District Meeting were equally novel in principle, as in fact and practice. We are perfectly aware that the Conference, on Mr. Wesley's death, professed to have derived from him the *absolute* government of the Methodist Connexion. On this subject, however, we shall beg leave to remark,

1. That Mr. Wesley's power never was absolute. It is a libel on his memory to pretend, that he ever claimed such a lordship over God's inheritance. It is true, that neither Mr. Wesley's power, nor the rights of the societies, were clearly defined. It is true, that such was the love and veneration which the people had for that apostolic man, that he might do almost what he pleased in the societies. But you admit, Sir, (page 23,) that he took counsel of the respective meetings. This counsel was his practice, as it was the practice of the Apostles; and, therefore, *from the beginning*, it was the practice of Methodism. Neither was it a mockery of consultation, as you would make it; but a truly Christian method of carrying on the affairs of the church. The right, as we have said, was not defined; but the practice was an admission of the right. Your assertion, that "Mr. Wesley, and the superintendants after him, although they took counsel of others, as wishing only to employ their power righteously, yet had the power, and often exercised it, to admit, expel, and remove from office, without any reference to such meetings at all," proves just nothing. Every superintendant does the same thing at this day. They were ordinary cases, on which no question arose, and which presented no occasion of general dissatisfaction, to call for inquiry. But where do you find, that Mr. Wesley ever refused an investigation, when deliberately called for by a leaders' meeting, in relation to the admission or expulsion of members or officers of the Society? or what evidence have you, that Mr. Wesley ever forced his societies into membership with persons, whom a leaders' meeting declared unworthy to be received; or that he ever expelled members on any ground, save that of unquestionable (and, therefore, unquestioned by any leaders' meeting) immorality,

or false doctrine? When, especially, did he ever divide a whole society upon any non-essential point? When did he expel a thousand members on any such question, and particularly on any question relating to an organ? Mr. Wesley's power, Sir, was the power of love. On any other principle, he could never have had any power at all, and would have found it as impossible to govern his societies as you will find it, if this coercive system he persisted in. The power for which you contend, is the very opposite of love. It is a power, as you tell us in page 9, to rule the church for its edification. The princes of the gentiles make the same profession. They profess to rule for the public good,—the edification of their states. "Ye know, that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion, lordship, authority, over them, and are called *benefactors*. But so shall it not be among you." Compare Matthew xx. 25. Mark x. 42. and Luke xxii. 25.

2. Notwithstanding the Conference, whilst agreed amongst themselves, were ready enough to declare, that they had derived absolute power to rule the Connexion from Mr. Wesley; yet, they were soon divided, and could not maintain the principle for a single year. In the very next Conference, (1792) they were obliged to take up the question of the administration of the Lord's Supper; and found, that their claim to absolute power, nay, even their power to administer that "Gospel Ordinance," was so far from being admitted by the people, that after casting lots, the Conference resolved: "The Lord's Supper shall not be administered by any person among our societies in England and Ireland, for the ensuing year, on any consideration whatsoever, except in London." And the prohibition extended even to the clergy of the Church of England.

It was impossible to discuss this subject of the Sacrament, without touching upon general rights, and questions of policy and power, as between the Conference and the people. These questions, once opened, were very fruitful ones. Accordingly, between 1792 and 1797, we find the Connexion literally deluged with publications, in which, so far from the favourite notion of absolute power being conceded to the Conference, the people were instructed in the true nature of their rights and liberties, according to the New Testament; and were called upon to assert and maintain these rights, in opposition to those trustees and preachers who opposed the introduction of the sacrament. Many of these pamphlets were written by the most esteemed and talented preachers in the Connexion, the companions and friends of Mr. Wesley. It was in this school, Sir, and on the call of those faithful guides, to whom our fathers gave heed in the great concerns of salvation, and not in the school of revolutionary France, as falsely insinuated, that our fathers learnt to assert their Christian liberty. It is true, that the

question assumed a practical form. It was of little consequence what Mr. Wesley's power had been. The point contended was, how far the Conference were entitled to rule the whole Connexion with an absolute sway; and whether the societies, like the primitive churches, ought not to have a participation in that government, to which their officers and members were called upon to submit. The arguments, as you are very well aware, were all on one side of the question. Reason, common sense, the Scriptures, and primitive practice, could never be enlisted on the side of despotic power, either in church or state. When, therefore, Dr. Coke's declaration, that the Conference was "the most perfect aristocracy existing, perhaps, upon earth," was generally admitted in the disputes between 1792 and 1797, it applied rather to the corporate spirit of the Conference, and to their sturdy reluctance to frame any Code of Laws, in which the rights of the people should be acknowledged and secured; than to the actual existence of any such aristocratical power in practice, or to any admission of it in principle on the part of the people. This distinction was clearly pointed out in the best publications of that day, and, indeed, was too obvious to be overlooked. To have maintained such an aristocracy, the Conference must have had the aid of the civil power.

3. The existence of such an absolute and irresponsible authority, was felt and declared, in the controversy to which we have alluded, to use the words of one of the writers of 1795, to be contrary, not only "to the oracles of God, but to the natural order of society." Despotic power, indeed, admits of but one distinction in human society, whether of church or state: viz., that of master and slave. It confounds all the gradations, and paralyses all the moral energies of mankind. It is degrading and debasing in principle; demoralizing and destructive in all its tendencies. It is equally so to him who wields such a deadly authority, and to those who, whether by tame submission or by the ascendancy of force, fall under the iron sceptre. Wherever it has prevailed, in the church especially, no order of men have been so corrupt as the higher clergy; none so degraded as the lower. Of its effects on the laity, the whole history of the papacy, to which our fathers appealed in 1797, is a standing memorial. We still hear the venerable Pawson raising his voice, with a crowd of others, and uttering this solemn warning; "Remember, O ye Methodists! that the reign of popery is past and gone; let it never be restored to you, under any shape or name. In the name of HIM, who bought you with his blood, maintain the rights and liberties of your consciences!" [1795.]

4. We contrast this warning voice with the echo by the last Conference,\* of another voice from America, sounding forth

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\* See Minutes of Conference, 1828, Address to the American Conference.

the old popish *jus divinum* ; claiming for the ministry, *exclusively*, as of *divine right*, and without any authoritative control from the church itself, not merely the administration, but the sole right of expounding and maintaining, 1. *Gospel Doctrines* ; that is, a right to preach and teach whatever they may please to admit into their creed as Gospel Doctrine. 2. *Ordinances* ; that is, to set up whatever worship, sacraments, and services, they may deem conformable to the Gospel ; and, 3. *Moral Discipline* ; that is, to admit and expel, censure and suspend, to set up and put down, whomsoever they please in the church of God, and for whatever causes to them shall seem meet. Now here, Sir, we think there is not only something, but a great deal, that is not only new in Methodism, but directly contrary to the Plan of Pacification ; which gives to "every trustee, steward, and leader, in conjunction with the preachers of the district, a VOTE [not the courtesy of a mock consultation] in the trial of a preacher, in four grand particulars: "And if the majority of the "meeting JUDGE, that the accused preacher is *immoral*, "*erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities*, or has "*broken any of the rules* above mentioned, he shall be "considered as removed from the circuit." This, Sir, is Methodism ; and when we contrast it with your new claim, to be considered as the divinely authorised expounders of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and discipline ; and hear you make it a matter of conscience, not to admit any authoritative interference of the church, we cannot but exclaim, like Mr. Pawson, "Remember, O ye Methodists ! that it was after the clergy had established these claims over the primitive church, that they introduced the doctrine of transubstantiation and saint worship, the ordinance of the mass, and the discipline of the Inquisition ! In the name, therefore, of Him, who bought you with his blood, maintain your rights and privileges." We shall only add here the words of Mr. Murlin, "the weeping prophet," in 1795, a man who excelled most men in holiness and love of souls ; "I beseech you to abolish your ungodly decrees, and do not publish your serious considerations, neither in the yearly Minutes, nor in the large Minute-book ; it may fix a disgrace upon the Methodists that are yet unborn. To the Methodist preachers in general, the Hundred in particular : my dear brethren, do not suffer yourselves to be bound neck and heels by the traditions of men, [certain travelling preachers who, like you, Sir, had presumed to lay down fundamental principles,] which make the commandment of God of none effect."

## APPENDIX A.

### ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT FOR GENERAL PACIFICATION, 1795.

#### I. *Concerning the LORD'S SUPPER, BAPTISM, &c.*

1. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except the majority of the trustees of that chapel, on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel, (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people,) on the other hand, allow of it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be first obtained, before the Lord's Supper be administered.

2. Wherever there is a society, but no chapel, if the majority of the stewards and leaders of that society testify, that it is the wish of the people that the Lord's Supper should be administered to them, their desire shall be granted; provided, that the consent of the Conference be first obtained.

3. Provided, nevertheless, that in Mount Pleasant chapel, at Liverpool, and in all other chapels, where the Lord's Supper has been already peaceably administered, the administration of it shall be continued in future.

4. The administration of Baptism, the Burial of the Dead, and Service in church-hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned.

5. Whenever the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the before-mentioned regulations, it shall always be continued, except the Conference order the contrary.

6. The Lord's Supper shall be administered by those only who are authorized by the Conference; and at such times, and in such manner only; as the Conference shall appoint.

7. The administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the above regulations, is intended only for the members of our own society.

8. We agree, that the Lord's Supper be administered among us, on Sunday evenings only: except where the majority of the stewards and leaders desire it in church-hours; or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the Parish Church.

9. The Lord's Supper shall always be administered, in England, according to the form of the Established Church: but the person



who administers, shall have liberty to give out hymns, and to use exhortation and extemporary prayer.

10. Wherever Divine Service is performed in England, on the Lord's Day, in church-hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the Service of the Established Church, our venerable father's Abridgment, or, at least, the Lessons appointed by the Calendar. But we recommend either the full Service, or the Abridgment.

## II. CONCERNING DISCIPLINE.

1. The appointment of preachers shall remain solely with the Conference; and no trustee, or number of trustees, shall expel or exclude from their chapel or chapels, any preachers so appointed.

2. Nevertheless, if the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders of any society, believe that any preacher appointed for their circuit, is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the preachers of the district, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that circuit, to meet in their chapel, on a day and hour appointed, (sufficient time being given.) The chairman of the district shall be president of the assembly; and every preacher, trustee, steward, and leader, shall have a single vote, the chairman possessing the casting voice. And if the majority of the meeting judge, that the accused preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrines, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that circuit; and the district committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another preacher for that circuit, instead of the preacher so removed; and shall determine among themselves how the removed preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference, and shall have authority to suspend the said preacher from all public duties, till the Conference, if they judge proper. The district committee shall also supply, as well as possible, the place of the removed preacher, till another preacher be appointed. And the preacher thus appointed, and all other preachers, shall be subject to the above mode of trial. And if the district committee do not appoint a preacher for that circuit, instead of the removed preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed preacher, till another preacher be appointed, the majority of the said trustees, stewards, and leaders, being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a preacher for the said circuit, provided he be a member of the Methodist Connexion, till the next Conference.

3. If any preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases mentioned above, he shall be considered as suspended till the next Conference. And if any trustees expel from any chapel a preacher, by their own *separate* authority, the preachers appointed for that circuit shall not preach in that chapel till the next Conference, or till a trial take place, according to the mode mentioned above.

4. If any trustees expel or exclude a preacher, by their own *separate* authority, from any chapel in any circuit, the chairman of the district shall summon the members of the district committee, the trustees of that circuit who have not offended, and the stewards and leaders of the circuit. And the members of such assembly shall examine into the evidence on both sides; and if the majority of them determine, that the state of the society, in which the exclusion took place, requires that a new chapel should be built previous to the meeting of the Conference, every proper step shall be immediately taken for erecting such chapel. And no step shall on any account be taken, to erect a chapel for such purpose, before the meeting of the Conference, till such meeting be summoned, and such determination be made.

5. No preacher shall be suspended or removed from his circuit by any district committee, except he have the privilege of the trial before-mentioned.

6. The Hundred preachers, mentioned in the enrolled Deed, and their successors, are the only legal persons, who constitute the Conference; and we think the junior brethren have no reason to object to this proposition, as they are regularly elected according to seniority.

7. Inasmuch as, in drawing up the preceding regulations, we have laboured to restore and preserve the peace and unity of the society, and, in order thereto, have endeavoured to keep the preachers out of all disputes on the subjects therein specified: Be it understood, that any preacher who shall disturb the peace of the society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper in our societies, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, shall be subject to the trial and penalties before-mentioned.

8. And in order that the utmost impartiality may be manifest in these regulations, for the peace of the whole body, we also resolve, that if any local preacher, trustee, steward, or leader, shall disturb the peace of the society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper, or concerning the old or new plan, so called, the superintendant of the circuit, or the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the society so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the travelling preachers of the circuit, and the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that society. Evidence shall be examined on both sides; and if the charge be proved, the superintendant preacher shall expel from the society the person so offending.

#### ADDENDA.

1. The Conference by no means wishes to divide any society, by the introduction of the Lord's Supper; and therefore, except that a majority of the stewards and leaders, who desire the Lord's Supper among themselves, testify in writing to the Conference, that they are persuaded that no separation will be made thereby, they will not allow it.

2. The Sacrament shall not be administered to a society in any private house, within two miles of the Methodist chapel, in which it is regularly administered.

3. We all agree, that the pulpit shall not be a vehicle of abuse.

4. It has been our general custom, never to appoint or remove a steward or leader, without first consulting the stewards and leaders of that society; and we are resolved to walk by the same rule.

5. To prevent, as much as possible, the progress of strife and debate, and consequent divisions in our Connexion, no pamphlet, or printed letter, shall be circulated among us without the author's name, and the postage or carriage paid.

6. Nothing contained in these Rules, shall be construed to violate the rights of the trustees, as expressed in their respective deeds.

*Manchester, August 6, 1795.*

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## APPENDIX B.

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### PRINTED CIRCULAR OF THE CONFERENCE, CONTAINING THE CONCESSIONS OF 1797.

TO THE METHODIST SOCIETIES.

*Dear Brethren,*

*Leeds, August 7, 1797.*

We think it our duty to inform you, by the earliest opportunity, of the measures we have taken, in order to satisfy those of our brethren, who have been made more or less uneasy, by sundry publications circulated through the Societies; and, we trust, that on a serious consideration of the regulations we have agreed to at this Conference, you will see that the sacrifices in respect to authority, which we have made on the part of the whole body of travelling preachers, evidence our willingness to meet our brethren in every thing which is consistent with the existence of the Methodist discipline, and our readiness to be their servants for Jesus's sake.

I. In respect to finances, or money-matters:

1. We have determined to publish annually a very minute account of the disbursement, or application, of the yearly Collection: And,

2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood school.

3. That all bills for the support of travelling preachers and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters of a temporal kind for their support, for which the circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the quarterly meeting, and be signed by the general steward of the circuit, before they can be brought to the district committee.

II. In respect to all other temporal matters:

1. It has been determined, that no circuits shall be divided

till such division has been approved of by their respective quarterly meetings, and signed by the general stewards.

2. That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the district committees, till the approbation of the respective quarterly meetings be first given, signed by the circuit stewards.

III. In respect to the receiving and excluding private members of the Society :

1. The leaders' meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial, improper to be received into the Society: and, after such declaration, the superintendant shall not admit such person into the Society.

2. No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a leaders' meeting

IV. In respect to the appointment and removal of leaders, stewards, and local preachers, and concerning meetings:\*

1. No person shall be appointed a leader or steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the leaders' meeting: the nomination to be in the superintendant, and the approbation or disapprobation to be in the leaders' meeting.

2. The former rule concerning local preachers is confirmed: viz. That no person shall receive a plan as a local preacher, without the approbation of a local preachers' meeting.

3. In compliance with a request made by the committee of persons from various parts, namely, "That the Conference be requested to re-consider and revise those rules which relate to the calling of meetings, and appointing local preachers, made last year," we say, "No local preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the superintendant of the circuit in which he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office, who act in conjunction with the superintendant of that circuit which he visits." The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of local preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, whom, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable local preachers in the kingdom, who were in the committee which met the committee of preachers appointed by the Conference, declared their high

\* This general title relates to the *removal* of local preachers as well as to their *appointment*; but no regulation follows relative to their removal. Mr. Beecham is careful to notice this omission, page 49, but from what motive he does not explain. The rule, in connection with its title, secures the principle; and the practice has hitherto been conformable to the principle. According to both principle and practice, as a local preacher can be admitted only by the consent of his brethren, so he cannot be removed without such consent. If this matter be questioned, we may have more to say upon it. Under the *fifth* general summary, we notice a synonyme to the same purpose, which makes the clause ridiculous, unless it be taken for a clerical error in writing, "*appointed*" instead of "*removed*."



approbation of the rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

4. As the committee above mentioned requested also, that the Minutes of the last Conference, concerning the calling of meetings to consider of the affairs of the Society or Connexion, be explained; and as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole body, we have agreed upon the following explanation: viz.

1. As the leaders' meeting is the proper meeting for the society, and the quarterly meeting for the circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences: But,

2. In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our societies, we allow, that other formal meetings may be held, if they receive the approbation of the superintendant, and the leaders' or quarterly meeting; provided also that the superintendant, if he please, be present at every such meeting.

V. We have selected all our ancient rules, which were made before the death of our late venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which are essential rules, or prudential at this present time; and have solemnly signed them, declaring our approbation of them, and determination to comply with them; one single preacher excepted,\* who, in consequence, withdrew from us.

VI. We have determined, that *all the rules* which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings, *shall be published with the Rules of the society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members.*

VII. In respect to all new rules, which shall be made by the Conference:

It is determined, that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the societies at large, and such rule shall be objected to, at the first quarterly meeting in any circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, be of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit; it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such quarterly meeting, before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the quarterly meetings, rejecting a new rule, shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the Connexion.

Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings.

1. We have delivered the whole of our yearly collection to

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\* Before the Conference concluded, two other preachers withdrew.



your management. For we know, by experience, that the bills of the quarterly meetings, if only mere justice be done to the preachers and their families, will amount to much more than the yearly collection. The Conference will, in this business, have no authority whatsoever: they will have nothing but the trouble of receiving the money, and paying the bills which shall have been sent to them from the quarterly meetings, and been approved of by the district committees. And when the accounts are published by the Conference, every quarterly meeting may compare its own accounts with those of the Conference, and thereby have as complete a check as the nature of things can possibly admit of.

The Conference has reserved to itself the management of its own book concerns. This is most reasonable: as the institution was established for the carrying on of the work of God, under the direction of Mr. Wesley and the Conference; was continued, by the deed or codicil of Mr. Wesley's will, for the use of the Conference; as the whole burden of the management of the business lies upon the Conference, and the servants they employ, and on the superintendants of circuits; and also, as it is the only fund which can supply any deficiencies of the yearly collection, as the accounts published in our Minutes for several years past clearly evidence, the yearly collection having not been nearly sufficient for the wants of the preachers and families, and for the carrying on of the work of God in general.

2. The whole management of our temporal concerns may now be truly said to be invested in the quarterly meetings, the district meetings having nothing left them but a negative.

3. Our societies have a full check on the superintendant, by the means of their leaders' meeting, in regard to the introduction of persons into society; whilst the superintendant has sufficient scope allowed him for the increase of the societies, not only according to the common course of things, but at the times of remarkable out-pourings of the Spirit of God.

4. The members of our societies are delivered from every apprehension of clandestine expulsions; as that superintendant would be bold indeed, who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole meeting of leaders. Such a superintendant, we trust, we have not among us: and if such there ever should be, we should be ready to do all possible justice to our injured brethren.

5. There is now no society-officer among us, who can be received without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs, nor can any officer be appointed,\* except upon the same plan.

6. In order to prevent any degree of precipitation in making new rules, and to obtain information of the sentiments of our people on every such rule, we have agreed to the article mentioned under the 7th head, by which no regulations will be finally confirmed, till after a year's consideration, and the knowledge

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\* *Query*, removed?

of the sentiments of the Connexion at large, through the medium of all their public officers.

In short, brethren, out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you by far the greatest part of the superintendant's authority : and, if we consider, that the quarterly meetings are the sources from whence all temporal regulations, during the intervals of Conference, must now originally spring; and also, that the committee, formed according to the Plan of Pacification, can, in every instance, in which the trustees, leaders, and stewards, choose to interfere, respecting the gifts, doctrines, or moral character of preachers, supersede, in a great measure, the regular district committees; we may, taking all these things into our view, truly say, that such have been the sacrifices we have made, that our district committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining, but a bare negative in general, and the appointment of a representative to assist in drawing up the rough draught of the stations of the preachers. And besides all this, we have given the quarterly meetings opportunities of considering every new law, of suspending the execution of it for a year in their respective circuits, and of sending their sentiments on it to the Conference, before it be finally confirmed.

We have represented these measures which we have taken for your satisfaction, in as concise a manner as we well could, giving you the sense of the whole, not only for brevity's sake, but for expedition, that you may be informed of the general heads of our proceedings as soon as possible. In the *Regulations*, which will be published with the *Rules of the Society*, as mentioned above, you will have the whole at large. We are, your affectionate brethren,

Signed, in behalf and by order of the Conference,  
THOMAS COKE, *President*.

SAMUEL BRADBURN, *Secretary*.

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## APPENDIX C.

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[The Conference of 1797, having "selected," and "solemnly signed," all their ancient rules, these rules were afterwards published at the Book-Room, in two separate pamphlets. The first consisted entirely of extracts from the Minutes of Conference, and contained matters belonging particularly to travelling preachers, for whom it was designed as a Manual. This publication, of course, contains the Miscellaneous Regulations, but does not contain *the Rules of Society*, nor all the regulations relating to quarterly meetings, local preachers, stewards, &c. It was not, therefore, the one referred to by the Conference, in Art. 6 of their printed Circular of the 7th of August, 1797. The second pamphlet was intended as a Manual for the local officers and people; and, as promised by the Conference, it contains, *with the Rules of the Society*, "THE WHOLE AT LARGE;" viz. "all the rules which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings." Notwithstanding it is expressly stated, in an introductory note, to be published "*in execution*

of the above-mentioned determination" of the Conference, (see Art. 6, p. 126,) Mr. Beecham throws this publication on one side, and substitutes for it the *Miscellaneous Regulations*!! It was necessary to do this, or to give up his main hypothesis; for this publication, which was to contain "*the whole at large*," does not contain the *Miscellaneous Regulations*;—a clear proof that those Regulations had no reference to the people, but referred to the preachers, as the only parties amenable to the district meeting. (See the note, p. 45.) Myles, Crowther, Dr. Warren, and every other writer on the constitution, give the following Code of Laws as the one referred to by the printed Circular of the 7th August, 1797.\* The following is from an early copy.]

## RULES RELATING TO THE SOCIETY.

### *I. Of receiving Members into the Society.*

1. The leaders' meeting has a right to declare any person on trial improper to be received into the society: and, after such declaration, the superintendant shall not admit such person into society.

2. Neither the superintendants, nor any other preachers, shall give tickets to any, until they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial.

3. No preacher shall give notes (admitting persons on trial) to any but those who are recommended by one he knows, or until they have met three or four times in a class.

4. He must give them the Rules of the society the first time they meet.

5. As some of our people have, in different parts of the kingdom, been imposed on, in various ways, by swindlers, who professed themselves members of our society, let no person be received into any society, without a certificate, signed by one of the itinerant preachers in the circuit from whence he professes to have come. 1779.

### *II. Of the Exclusion of Members from the Society.*

1. The far greater number of those that are separated from us, exclude themselves by neglecting to meet in class, and use the other means of grace, and so gradually forsake us. With regard to the others,

2. Our rule is fixed, and our custom expressed in the preceding rules of society, where it is said, "If there be any among us, who observe them not, who habitually break any of them,—we will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season: But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us."

3. No person must be expelled from the society for any breach of our rules, or even for manifest immorality, till such fact or crime has been proved at a leaders' meeting.

### *III. Of permitting Strangers to be present at the Society Meetings and Love-feasts.*

1. Let every other meeting of the society be for the members of the society only; and let no strangers be admitted. At other

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\* See Dr. Warren's Digest, vol. i. page 265.

times some may be permitted to be present: but the same persons not above three times.

2. Let all the members of the society show their tickets; and if the stewards and leaders are not exact, others must be employed that have more resolution.

3. Let no person attend any love-feast, without a note from the preacher.

4. Let no love-feast be appointed but by the consent of the superintendant; nor any funeral sermon be preached, without his consent, and for those only who die happy in the Lord.

#### *IV. Of Service in Church Hours.*

The cases in which it has been agreed to allow service in what are commonly called church hours, are,

1. When the church minister, rector, vicar, or curate, is a notoriously wicked man.

2. When he preaches Arian, Socinian, or any other equally pernicious doctrine.

3. When there are not churches in the town or parish sufficient to contain the people.

4. Where there is no church within two or three miles.

5. When a majority of the trustees of any chapel, on the one hand; and of the stewards and leaders of the society belonging to that chapel, on the other, allow of and request it; and as to places where there is a society, and no chapel, wherever the majority of the stewards and leaders of that society testify that it is the wish of the people, and that it will cause no division among them.

6. Wherever divine service is performed in England on the Lord's-day, in church hours, the officiating preacher shall read either the Service of the Church, our venerable Father's Abridgment of it; or, at least, the Lessons appointed by the calendar. But we recommend either the full Service or the Abridgment.

#### *V. Concerning the Administration of the Ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in our Societies.*

1. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except a majority of the trustees of that chapel, on the one hand, and a majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel, as the best qualified to give the sense of the people, on the other, allow it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of Conference shall be first obtained before this ordinance shall be administered.

2. Where there is a society, but no chapel, if the majority of the stewards and leaders of that society testify, in writing, to the Conference, that it is the wish of the people that the Lord's Supper should be administered among them, and that no separation will be made thereby, their desire shall be granted.

3. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered to a society in a private house, within two miles of a Methodist chapel.

4. The Lord's Supper shall be administered by the superinten-

dant only, or such of his helpers as are in Full Connexion, and as he shall appoint; provided, that no preacher be required to give it against his own inclination; and should it be granted to any place where the preachers on the circuit are all unwilling to give it, the superintendant shall, in that case, invite a neighbouring preacher, who is properly qualified, to give it.

5. It shall be administered at such times and in such manner as the Conference shall appoint. And the Conference agree, that the Lord's Supper shall be administered among us on Sunday evenings only; except the majority of the stewards and leaders desire it in church hours; or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parish church.

6. The Lord's Supper shall always be administered in England according to the form of the Established Church; but the person who administers shall have liberty to give out hymns, to use exhortation, and extemporary prayer.

7. Wherever the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the above-mentioned regulations, it shall always be continued, except the Conference order otherwise.

8. No persons shall be suffered, on any pretence, to partake of the Lord's Supper among us, unless he be a member of society, or receive a note of admission from the superintendant, (or the preacher administering,) which note must be renewed quarterly. And if any leaders, stewards, or trustees, refuse to be regulated by this rule, the Sacrament shall not be administered where this is the case.

9. The administration of Baptism and the Burial of the Dead, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned, respecting the Lord's Supper.

#### *VI. On Conformity to the World and Sabbath-breaking.*

1. Those schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who receive dancing-masters into their schools, and those parents who employ dancing-masters for their children, shall be no longer members of our society.

2. To prevent or remedy the evils of dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, or smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, the preachers shall solemnly and frequently warn the societies against these evils, and inform them, that they who are guilty of them, cannot be permitted to remain with us.

3. We strongly recommend to all the members of our societies, the religious observation of the Lord's-Day, and desire our superintendants to exclude from the society, all who buy or sell on that sacred day, except in case of medicine for the sick, or for supplying necessaries for funerals.

4. No member of our society must employ any barber on the Lord's-Day. And all our people, who possibly can, are desired



to employ only those barbers who conscientiously abstain from Sabbath-breaking.

5. No member of our society must make any wake or feast, or go to any on the Lord's-Day, but bear a public testimony against them.

#### *VII. Of Marrying with Unbelievers.*

Some of our members have married with unbelievers, yea, with unawakened persons. This has had fatal effects. They have had either a cross for life, or turned back unto perdition. To put a stop to this, every preacher is enjoined to enforce frequently the Apostle's caution, "Be not unequally yoked." And he is openly to declare, that whoever does this shall be expelled the society. When any such are expelled, he is to subjoin a suitable exhortation, and to urge all single persons to take no step in so weighty a matter, without advising with the most serious of their Christian friends.

#### *VIII. Of Bankruptcies.*

To prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupts, the superintendant shall talk with them at large. And if any of them have not kept fair accounts, or have been concerned in the base practice of raising money by coining notes, commonly called the bill trade, he shall be expelled immediately.

#### *IX. Of Loyalty and Subjection to the King and Government.*

None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which he lives. We are to observe, that the Oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers; and that "honour to the king" is there connected with the "fear of God." 1792.

#### *X. Of Days of Fasting.*

A general Fast shall be held in all our societies the first Friday after New Year's day; after Lady-day; after Midsummer-day; and after Michaelmas-day.

### **RULES RELATING TO THE OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETIES.**

#### *I. Of the Appointment or Change of Stewards and Leaders.*

1. No person shall be appointed a leader or society-steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with a leaders' meeting; the nomination to be in the superintendant, and the approbation or disapprobation in the leaders' meeting.

2. As several inconveniences have arisen respecting the change of stewards; to remedy this, let it be observed, that the office of a steward ceases at the end of the year; and every superintendant is required to change one steward at least; so that no steward may be in office above two years together, except in some extraordinary cases.

3. The proper time for changing the circuit-stewards, is at the quarterly meeting, when the superintendant shall consult all who

are present, respecting the most proper person or persons to act in that capacity.

4. The place for appointing or changing the steward of any particular society, is the leaders' meeting of that society. For in the general, "No person can be received as a society-officer among us, without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs; nor can any officer be appointed,\* except on the same plan."—Minutes of 1797.

## *II. Of the Local Preachers and their Meetings.*

1. The superintendant shall regularly meet the local preachers once a quarter; and no person shall receive a plan as a local preacher, nor be suffered to preach among us as such, without the approbation of that meeting. Or, if in any circuit a regular local preachers' meeting cannot be held, they shall be proposed and approved at the general quarterly meeting of the circuit. 1794.

2. All local preachers shall meet in class. No exception shall be made in respect to any who have been travelling preachers in former years. 1793.

3. Let no local preacher, who will not meet in class, or who is not regularly planned by the superintendant of the circuit where he resides, be permitted to preach.

4. Let no local preacher be permitted to preach in any other circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the superintendant of that circuit in which he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, except from men in office, who act in conjunction with the superintendant of that circuit which he visits. N.B. The design of this Rule is to prevent any, under the character of local preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money or living upon them, and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them. But it was never intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, whom, as a body, we greatly respect.

5. Let no local preacher keep love feasts, without the consent of the superintendant, nor in any wise interfere with his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his station.

6. No preacher, who has been suspended or expelled, shall, on any account, be employed as a local preacher, without the authority of Conference.

## *III. Concerning Trustees.*

1. The trustees, in conjunction with the superintendant, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own stewards; who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest of money due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal. The aforesaid steward shall keep proper accounts in books provided for that purpose; which books shall be open for the inspection of the superintendant, and audited in his presence once every year; or oftener, if convenient.

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\* Query, removed?

2. No trustee, however accused, or defective in conformity to the established Rules of the Society, shall be removed from the society, unless his crime or breach of the Rules of the Society be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders. 1794.

*IV. Of the Quarterly Meetings, composed of the Stewards of the different Societies in each Circuit.*

1. All bills for the support of travelling preachers and their families; for house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters; for which the circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the quarterly meetings, and be signed by the general steward of the circuit, before they can be brought to the district committee.

2. No circuits shall be divided, until such division has been approved by the respective quarterly meetings, and signed by the general steward.

3. Before any superintendant propose a preacher to the Conference as proper to be admitted on trial, such preacher must be approved of at the March quarterly meeting. 1797.

## APPENDIX D.

[We have printed the following Miscellaneous Regulations, in order that the reader may have them to compare with the foregoing Code of Laws. These Regulations were published by the Conference of 1797, as already observed, in what is denominated the "LARGE MINUTES;" *that publication* being a continuation of the "Large Minutes" published by Mr. Wesley, for the government of the preachers. A copy of these Large Minutes, continued to 1797, now lies before us. Dr. Warren justly observes, "As the 'LARGE MINUTES,' published by Mr. Wesley, contain the principles by which the PREACHERS are governed; so the 'PLAN OF PACIFICATION,' agreed upon between the preachers and the people in the year 1795, and the subsequent 'REGULATIONS MADE AT LEEDS,' in the year 1797, constitute a basis of the government of the SOCIETIES." (Warren's Digest, vol. i. page 223) It is, therefore, clear, from their not being incorporated in the Code of Laws relative to the PEOPLE, but being embodied with the Large Minutes for the government of the PREACHERS, that they relate *solely* to the discipline of the latter.]

### SUNDRY MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS.

#### I. WITH RESPECT TO DISTRICTS.

I. In order to render our districts more effective, the President of the Conference shall have power, when applied to, to supply a circuit with preachers, if any should die or desist from travelling; and to sanction any change of preachers, which it may be necessary to make in the intervals of the Conference. And to assist at any district meeting, if applied to for that purpose, by the chairman of the district, or by a majority of the superintendants in each district. And he shall have a right, if written to by any who are concerned, to visit any circuit, and

to inquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and, in union with the district committee, redress any grievance.

2. The chairman of each district, in conjunction with his brethren of the committee, shall be responsible to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his district is concerned.

3. That no chairman may have cause to complain of the want of power, in cases, which (according to his judgment) cannot be settled in the ordinary district meeting, he shall have authority to summon three of the nearest superintendants, to be incorporated with the district committee, who shall have equal authority to vote, and settle every thing till the Conference.

4. The Conference recommends it to the superintendants of the circuits, to invite, on all important occasions, the chairmen of their respective districts to be present at their quarterly meetings.\*

5. The chairman of every district shall be chosen by the ballot of the Conference, after the names of all the preachers in the district have been read to them by the Secretary.

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\* "But he (the chairman) must never individually *interfere* with any circuit but his own."—Min. of Con. 1792, republished 1797.